GLORY BE UNTO THE FATHER   
NO. 1738

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 9 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has   
chosen us in Him before the foundation of   
the world, that we should be holy and   
without blame before Him in love.   
Ephesians 1:3, 4.

LAST Lords Day I finished the morning services at Exeter Hall with a sermon upon Johns choice doxology, Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. [Sermon #1737, Volume 29, Johns First Doxology.] I felt, therefore, that it would be most fitting to open this series of services with another doxology. And as the last was in praise of the Second Person of the Divine Unity, this is to the honor and glory of the adorable Person of the Father. May God, who gave His servants a praiseful spirit so that their Epistles abound with doxologies, give the same spirit of joyous thankfulness to us at this time, that we may all say from the very bottom of our hearts, Amen, to our text, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of praise, we may say what was said concerning salt in the Scripture, without prescribing how much. Oh to praise and pray without ceasing! May the Holy Spirit work in us perpetual thanksgiving! Observe well that the same words are used in reference to our wish towards God and Gods act towards usBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us. It is a very striking thing that our poor pebble stones of wishes should be valued so much that the same words should be used in reference to them as in reference to the priceless diamonds of Grace which the Lord has bestowed upon us! We bless God because He blesses us. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Now, it is easy to understand how the Father of Mercies, from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds, really blesses us. But how can we be said to bless Him? And what is the distinction between that and praising Him? For there is a distinction, since we read, All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, and Your saints shall bless You. Praise rises even from lifeless objects, as they display the power and wisdom of their Creator. But intelligence, will and intent are necessary for blessing God. Praise is the manifestation of our inward reverence and esteemit adores and magnifiesbut in blessing God, we think well of Him and wish Him well and desire that others may do the same!

In blessing God there is the desire to do good to God even as He does to usif it were possible! We fail in the power with which to accomplish such a desire, but it is well that it is in our hearts. God cannot actually receive anything from us for His own enrichment or increasefor all things that we can do for Him are His, alreadyand they must be done in His strength, so that, when all is done, it must be said, Of Your own have we given You. Neither can we add to His splendor or His happiness, for He is, by Nature, inconceivably glorious and infinitely blessed! But if such an increase were within our power, we would gladly render it. If all things were ours, we would lay them at His feet. And such things as we have, though we cannot give them directly to Him, yet we give them to His cause and to the poor of His people.

What says the Psalmist? O Lord, You are my God; my goodness extends not to You, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. We are happy that, in assisting needy Believer, we are blessing the Lord. There is also a considerable measure of blessing God in such prayers as theseHallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. When we gladly ascribe unto the Lord, glory, power and dominion, we are blessing Him. When we wish other men to love and serve the Lord and do Him homage, we are blessing Him. When we desire to love Him more, ourselves, and feel our hearts burn with aspirations after fellowship with Him, we are blessing Him. When we are zealous to make known the Truth of the Gospel which glorifies God, and to make known His Son in whom especially He is revealed, we are blessing God!

In sacred silence, when the heart cannot translate her emotions into words, and hardly into thoughts, we can bless the Lord. In rendering unto God such things as we can render and in always asking the still larger questionWhat shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?we are blessing Him. If we cheerfully await His bidding, and count it a delight to stand with girded loins, crying, What would You have me to do? Have You an errand for these willing feet? Here I am! Send me, then we are, in effect, blessing our Lord! Can you sing from your soul

*Theres not a lamb among Your flock   
I would refuse to feed!   
Theres not a foe before whose face   
Id fear Your cause to plead?*

Then are you in that state of heart in which all that is within you blesses Gods holy name! Blessed be God! We would make Him better known and so increase His manifest glory, wishing all the while that we could do a thousand times more!

May our hearts be, at this time, filled with high ideas of the goodness and greatness of the Lordand so may our souls be ready to burst forth in praise, eager for service, and bowed in reverent adoration. Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron: bless the Lord, O house of Levi: you that fear the Lord, bless the Lord! Blessed be the Lord out of Zion which dwells at Jerusalem. Praise the Lord. May we be stirred up to bless the Lord by the teaching of our text!

I. Here we have, first of all, GOD THE FATHER VIEWED ARIGHT. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Divine Father is viewed aright, He becomes the object of our gratitude, not of our dread. Instead of trembling before Him as before an austere judge, we rejoice in Him as a tender Father. He is no more to us the Thunderer of Sinai, but the Father of our spirits. Among the ignorant, it is too much the custom to ascribe every mercy to the Lord Jesus Christ and to think that He is all kindness and gentleness, while the Father is full of stern justice and severitybut it is not so! God is Love and that Love dwells equally in each of the sacred Three. Our Lord Jesus Christ comes to us by reason of the love of the Fatherthanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.

In every act of the Lord Jesus, He reveals the tenderness and Grace of the Father to us. He says, He that has seen Me has seen the Father, and, I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us. The love of the Father is, in all respects, equal to the love of the Son! We must never, for a single moment, set one Person of the Holy Trinity before another in our minds. We must believe in the love of the Spirit, and speak of, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father which has loved us. Let us never fall into the mistaken idea that the atoning Sacrifice of Christ was intended to make an angry God willing to be merciful! Far otherwiseJesus dies not to create mercy in Gods heart, but to open a way for the exercise of the mercy which was there from all eternity!

To our apprehension, God may seem changed when we realize the great reconciliation, but in very deed He was always full of Grace. Gods love went forth towards His chosen before the Savior died and because He loved them, therefore He gave His Son to die for them. Let us see, in this death of our Redeemer, not the cause, but the result of Gods love! And let us magnify the Father who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Is not the Father, from this point of view, the object of our love, praise and blessing? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us cast out the fear which has tormentlet us no longer stand afar off, but draw near unto God with childlike confidence and hearts aglow with ardent love. May the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God!

Next, if we would view the Father aright we must regard Him as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a wonderful title. We often sing Praise the God of Abrahamand truly it is blessed to view God as the God of Abraham, but how much more as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus, after His resurrection, called Him, My Father, and your Father: my God, and your God. And when He was in the act of expiring, He cried, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? To our Lord Jesus as Man, the Father was God, and He worshipped Him and served Him. How frequently Jesus drew near to God in prayer! How constantly He rendered obedience to Him!

Our Lord also says of Himself in the 22nd PsalmI will declare Your name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise You. Thus did our Mediator bow before the Throne of God and admit to the Truth of God then present, My Father is greater than I. I delight to think that God is now dealing with His people as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, for what blessings are there which God would not give to the Son of the Highest, that holy Thing that was born of Mary? How greatly must God bless Him, the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, of whom it is written in the Psalm: You loves righteousness and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.

God, I say, is dealing with His own chosen as He deals with the perfectly obedient One! By the obedience of Jesus, many are made righteous and treated as suchand we are among the many who are accepted in the Beloved! It is the God of Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and to Him Paul prayed for the Ephesians, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. You remember how the tribes of Israel were blessed by the God of Jacob for their fathers sake? Even so are we blessed by the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the measure in which He would bless His spotless Son, Jesus! Think, then, of the infinite Jehovah as the God of our Lord Jesus and, therefore, the God of His redeemed people.

The text title is, The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which may respect the double affiliation of Christ. First, as to His Godheadthere is that mysterious Sonship which we cannot understand, but which is, nevertheless, clearly revealed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as Jesus is God. And then there is that second Sonship which belongs to Christ as Man, in which, again, He is said to be the Son of God. God sent forth His Son, made of a woman. The Father thrice said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The great work of expiation is over and, now is the Son of God glorified. And the Father manifests His unbounded love to His Sonlet it, then, be a matter of great joy to us that the Father loves His people even as He loves His Sonand blesses us as He blesses Him!

Even as Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh because of his love to Joseph, even so, the great Father lays His mighty hand in benediction upon all His chosen and blesses the very least Believer as He blesses His Son Jesus! He who has highly exalted His Son, Jesus, to whom He stands in a double sense in the relation of a Father, has also prepared a throne in Glory for all who are in Christ. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! How endearing and attractive is the name! If we can view the Father in that light, we shall be able to approach Him with firmer confidence! We shall rejoice in Him with greater joy!

Note that the text contains a possessive pronounit says, not, The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, but, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is ours in this particular sense, that He is our federal Head, just as the first Adam, even the Adam who headed up the race and in whom we stood or fell. Jesus Christ, the second Adam, headed up and comprehended within Himself all the chosenand we who can claim that Christ is ours are, for that reason, able to claim all that belongs to Christ, for our heavenly Bridegroom endows us with all His possessions. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness have we all received, and Grace for Grace. Jesus says, All things that the Father has are Mine, and the Spirit says, All things are Yours and, therefore, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Believers, are you not one with Christ? Then Christs God is your God, Christs Father is your Father! You are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause did He leave His Father and cleave unto the Church, that He might be one flesh with her. All Believers are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This is the true view of the FatherHe is our Father, our God, our Saviors Father, our Saviors God! Let us delight ourselves in Him and magnify and bless His name!

II. We come, secondly, to notice THE BLESSING WHICH COMES FROM THE FATHER AS VIEWED BY FAITH. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. The blessing of God the Father has fallen from all eternity upon all who are in Christ, and that in the most copious manner, for the one blessing includes all spiritual blessings. This is a very pleasant thing to me because there can be no blessing like that of God. I know, said one of old, whom He blesses is blessed. Satan may curse you; you may already be suffering the curse of the Fall; but, if God blesses you, what of all that? Let the Lord say, I have blessed Him, and who can stop it, or who can reverse it?

The blessing of God makes you rich, safe, happy. When He commands the blessing, it is life forevermore. Why, it means an infinite blessing, the blessing of one Omnipotent to fulfill His Word; Omniscient to carry it out in every place; Immutable, so that it never can be reversed; eternal, so that it shall stand forever and ever! The blessing of God! What must it be? As is God, such is His blessing! Who that dives deepest into it, can fully comprehend all its meaning? The blessing of God the Father is a true and real blessingHe speaks not a lie nor a vanity. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He commanded, and shall it not stand fast? The blessing of God! How sure, how effectual! Oh, to receive it!

He that has it, though he is in poverty, he is rich! Though he is in sorrow, he is consoled! Though in shame, he has honor! Though he lie dying, he shall revivethough he were dead, yet shall he live! Such a blessing as this is enough to turn a dungeon into a paradise, a Hell into Heavenand if it falls upon the most desponding and despairing, it must make their hearts dance for joy!

I have already told you this is the blessing of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I would remind you that it was the custom of fathers to give blessings to their sons. All through the Old Testament we find patriarchs, when about to die, calling their children together, and pronouncing a blessing upon them. I should have liked to have received the blessing of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacobbut what must be the blessing of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as He lays His hand upon each one of our poor unworthy heads and says, Surely, blessing I will bless you? Jacob could not bless the beloved Joseph after the fashion in which the Lord blesses His beloved Son and those who are in Him! You could not desire a greater blessing than you have at this day, for the text says, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

I would call your attention very particularly to the fact that it is here stated that God has already given the blessing. Strictly speaking, I suppose it should be read, God blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus and He continues to do the same. Do you seek a blessing from God? He has pronounced it already upon you! Do you require anything? You have itit is given to you in the Covenant of Grace! Like when the Lord blessed Abraham, He gave him the land of Canaan, so has He given to you all Covenant blessings. You have only to ask of the Lord and He will give you to enjoy each blessing according as it will be for your good. No good thing will the Lord withhold from you! All you now have to do is, by prayer and faith, to grasp and enjoy the mercy, for He has said For this good thing will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.

Alas! says one, I have some blessings, but need many more. This is your unbelief, for all spiritual blessings are pronounced upon you. Yours are the precious things of Heaven, the dew and the deep, which couches beneath. The chief things of the ancient mountains and the precious things of the everlasting hills are yours and no part of your inheritance shall be torn away from you. The Eternal Father has pronounced a boundless blessing upon you as you are in Christ Jesus! He has spoken it and He will make it good! When, therefore, you are in need, bow the knee and say, My Father, You have given me this already in Christ. Now, therefore, fulfill this word unto Your servant, whereon You have caused me to hope. When Jacob rose up from his fathers bedside, he knew that Isaacs blessing was upon him, and even so the benediction of the Father is on every Believer.

Rise up, you heir of Heaven! Shake yourself from the dust, for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed you out of the fullness of His heart and you are blessed, indeed! The benediction is as comprehensive as your needsif you lack all things, behold, all things are here! Notice the Apostle, here, dwells mainly upon all spiritual blessings. Does he, therefore, exclude temporal mercies? No, Brothers and Sisters, the greater secures the lesser! Doubtless Paul thought the comforts of time and sense to be so secondary compared with spiritual blessings in heavenly places that he thought it no wrong to omit them or consider them to be included while he lifted up his praise in this verse to the Father for His spiritual giftsfor He that gives us the gold of spiritual blessings will never deny us the silver of temporal blessings!

He that gives us Heaven will surely give us all that is necessary on the road there. Abraham gave gifts to his sons by Keturah and sent them away. But to Isaac, he gave the inheritance which is described as, all that he had. Spirituals are the best giftsthe heritage given to the first-born. Delight yourselves in spiritual things, for this will mark the distinction between you and the carnal man who has his portion in this life, whereas the Believers motto is, The Lord is my portion. Look at the worldling. If his barns are full of corn and his presses bursting with new wine, then he is happy, for he cares not for spiritual things and his souls poverty does not trouble him. You and I are of another qualityspirituals are our first demand and without them we are undone! Our covetousness is for much of the Spirits gifts and Gracesmuch love, much faith, much holiness, much communion with the Father and the Son! The temporals we can leave with our heavenly Father, who knows that we have need of all these things.

We shall have enough spending money on the road to Glory, for He who has guaranteed to bring us there will not starve us on the way! Spiritual blessings are such as concern our spirit, which is our nobler part. They have a fullness about them which can never dwell in the disappointing riches of earth. And they are of a substantial and enduring nature which widely separates them from the shadows of mere carnal delight. Every mouth may eat of the bread of the body, but truly blessed are they that eat bread in the Kingdom of God! Every dog, as he runs, may drink of the Nile, but to drink of the river of the Water of Life is another matter! Spiritual blessings are for spiritual men, for they only can appreciate or even perceive themthey are a prepared portion for a prepared people! They range from the first painful sense of sin up to the sinless perfection of eternal Gloryand all these blessings are pronounced upon the head of each heir of salvation! Shall we not praise and magnify the Father for this?

These are the good and perfect gifts which are from aboveand come from the unchanging Father of Lightsto Him be glory in the Church throughout all ages forever and ever. These blessings are ours, personally, for He has blessed us. It is not upon the clouds that the blessing falls, but upon individuals. He loved me and gave Himself for me. The Lord has said to His people, You are the blessed of the Lord and your offspring with you. Personal appropriation is the main thing that we need; all else lies ready to our hand. Nothing more could be provided, nothing more needs to be desired. We need faith to take to ourselves the heavenly provision and, for lack of it, we go hungering in the midst of plenty!

Brothers and Sisters, there is no need for this! We do not do well to sit with the lepers at Samarias gate when we have but to awaken ourselves and find abundant provision for ourselves and all the Kings household. Furthermore, note well that our heavenly Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Spiritual blessings are heavenly thingsthey come from Heaven, they lead to Heaventhey are of a heavenly nature and are such as are enjoyed in Heaven itself! You may read the text either as heavenly places or heavenly things, and be equally correct. It is a wonderful thing that, even here on earth, the saints enjoy and experience heavenly blessings, for a new nature is a heavenly thinglove, joy in God, rest, safety and acceptance in the Beloved are all heavenly things. If you read it, places, it is equally true that Heaven and all its mansions are ours and we have already taken possession of them in Christ Jesus, our Representative and Forerunner!

When God made the Covenant with Abraham which gave him the land of Canaan, Abraham had not yet a foot of land that he could call his ownand when he died, he only possessed a cave for burial! But yet, in truth, according to the decrees of Heaven, the land of Canaan belonged to Abraham and his seed, for had not the Lord said, Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates? They had the title-deeds of it, though, for a while, the Canaanites held it as tenants upon lease. Now, all the spiritual blessings which belong to the heavenly estate at this moment are the property of the heirs of Heavenand God has said to each one of themLift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which you see, to you will I give it.

The blessings laid up in reserve for those who love God are secured to them in the Covenant made with Christ and we wait only for the time when the Lord our God shall surely bring us into the purchased possession. All things necessary for the heavenly life are already secured to the people of God in Christ Jesus, in whom, also, they have obtained an inheritance. My Brothers and Sisters, does not this lift you up and make you feel yourself to be a different person? You thought you had only a little Divine Grace, but all spiritual and heavenly blessings are yours! You never dreamed that you could touch Heaven so closelybut Heaven has a wide sweep and is to be found not only in Glory above, but in Grace belowfor God has made us kings even now! We are already in the kingdom of Heaven and upon heavenly manna we are fed at this day! Where Christ is, there is Heaven, and He is in our hearts!

The sun is above, but inasmuch as his light and heat are here, we say that we sit in the sun and bask in the sun. Even so, though the Presence of Jesus is in Glory, yet we enjoy on earth that sacred Revelation of God which is the center and essence of Heaven! Present Grace is Heaven begun in the soulhe that dwells in love, dwells in God and God in him what more can Heaven be? Even now, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That which God has given to us is not bounded by the narrow horizon of this present visible world, but He has given to us all heavenly things most richly to enjoy! The boundless glories of eternity even now belong to us by virtue of the Fathers benediction which He has pronounced on us in Christ Jesus!

Here let me enquire whether you belong to the company upon whom the Divine blessing rests. Are you seeking to be saved by your own works? Then you are not saved by Grace through Christ Jesus! Are you without faith in Christ? Then the heavenly blessing does not belong to you. The inheritance is secured to a seed who are, by faith, the children of faithful Abraham, born not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Can you say, I believe in Jesus Christ and fix my trust upon the promises of a faithful God? Then take possession of the Covenant provision and be glad in the Lord. We must not fail to note that the plenitude of spiritual and heavenly blessings only comes to us in Christ. It is not in ourselves that these gifts are vestedwe hold them by virtue of our union with the Lord Jesus. He is that golden case in which the treasures of the Covenant are enclosed and secured.

He is our Trustee, holding the heritage for us and this is the form of our tenurejoint-heirs with Christ. How precious, then, is our union with Him! Of what vital importance is it to be bound up in the bundle of life with Him! As without Him we can do nothing, without Him we can possess nothing. In Him we have already received a thousand blessings in actual experience and in Him there is laid up a boundless supply for future enjoyment. At the thought of this let our hearts sing hallelujahs! In the spirit of sonship let us reverence the Father of our spirits who is also the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. Blessed, forever blessed, be the Lord God of Heaven and earth, for His unutterable goodness to His chosen in the Person of His dear Son. Let us sing unto Him

*O measureless might!   
Ineffable love!   
While angels delight   
To hymn You above,   
The humbler creation,   
Though feeble their lays,   
With true adoration   
Shall lisp to Your praise.*

III. Thirdly and briefly, let us observe THE FIRST OUTFLOW OF THESE HEAVENLY BLESSINGS. The fountain of eternal love bursts forth in our electionAccording as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. Consider these words, one by one. The first is, He has chosenGod has a will and a choice in the matter of salvation! Some people do not like this doctrine, but they must have it whether they like it or not, or else they must reject the Words of Inspiration! Is mans will to be deified? Is the whole result of the scheme of salvation to depend upon the creatures choice? God forbid! The Father has made a choice of some men unto eternal lifethese He has given to His Son Jesusall these the Lord Jesus has redeemed with His own blood and pledged Himself to bring them to Glory. Has He not said, All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me?

God has made a choice, then, and you who are Believers in Christ may rest assured that you are the objects of this choice. The Lord Himself gave you your faith and brought you into living union with Jesus! Do you not bless Him for this? It seems to me that here is something for which to praise and bless the Father world without end! Carefully note that election shapes everythingthe Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. According as He has chosen us in Christ. All the Grace of earth and the glory of Heaven come to us in accordance with the eternal choice. There is not a single gift that comes from the blessed hand of the Divine Redeemer but is stamped with the mark of Gods electing love! We were chosen to each mercy and each mercy was appointed for us. If we will not have the Fathers election, we cannot have His blessing, for His gifts are plainly stated to be according to His choicethey come because of the choice and they prove the choicethey should, therefore, remind us of our election and call forth our sweetest songs. They should make us ask with David Why all this to me? A man who is elect of God ought to sing the praises of God both day and night, for he is chosen to show forth the praises of Jehovah!

The next words are, He has chosen us. Herein is Grace, indeed! What could there be in us that the Lord should choose us? Some of us feel ourselves the most unworthy of the unworthy and we can see no trace of a reason for our being chosen. So far from being choice men in our own esteem, we feel ourselves, by nature, to be the very reverse. But if God has chosen us, then let our hearts love Him, our lips extol Him, our hands serve Him and our whole lives adore Him

*Loved of my God, for Him again   
With love intense I burn!   
Chosen of You before time began,   
I choose You in return.*

Then we are told He has chosen us in Christ Jesus. He first chose Christ as the Head and then looked through Christ upon us and chose us to be members of Christs mystical body. We are, none of us, chosen apart from Jesus Christ, but we are chosen in Christ, loved in Christ, given to Christ, united to Christ and accepted in Christ. This is a blessed way of being chosen, for none can separate us from Christ and, consequently, till the Father changes His choice of Christ, He cannot and will not reverse His choice of His people! Until Christ ceases to be Gods elect, the Father can never cast away those who are chosen in Christ Jesus!

Moreover, we are told the time when this choice was madeBefore the foundation of the world. This is the earliest conceivable period. When this earth was fitted up for man, we know, for the Scriptures inform us, but how many ages elapsed before it was furnished for our race, we do not know. Yet long before that period the Father had chosen His people! The foundation of the world may mean its first creation, when it was spoken out of nothingthat must be ages of ages ago, but before that the Father chose us! Remember those Words, who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Before sun and moon had been created, or any of the visible things were formed, God had set His heart upon His people in Christ and ordained them to eternal life in Him!

Gods love is no novelty. His choice is no sudden act. Blessed doctrine! I know of none, which, if rightly considered, has a greater tendency to draw out the intense affection and reverent admiration of human hearts. Did the Lord of Glory choose me from before the foundation of the world? Then, by His Grace, I choose Him with all my heart to be my Lord, my All! Did He love me from of old? Then, by His Grace, I will love Him with all my soul and strength and pray that my heart may be enlarged to love Him more! This is mentioned here in order that you may bless the Fatherlet there now flow from your hearts a mighty stream of gratitude which shall cover your whole being and bear your lives along in the channel of obedience. Come, my Heart, bless the Father at this moment and never cease from His praise while life and being last, or immortality endures!

IV. Fourthly and lastly, our text reminds us of another cause for praise, namely, the DESIGNED RESULT OF ALL THIS BLESSINGThat we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. It is Gods eternal design that His people should be holyand He has pursued this purpose at infinite cost. This is the design of all the blessings which the Father has given us in Christ. All these favors are a call to us to be holyand each one has a tendency to promote our sanctification. When you grow in Grace, faith, hope, joyall that growth is towards holiness. Always think of that and bless God for your Graces by manifesting their influence in your conduct. Bless God for increased knowledge and deepened experience, for He has designed, by these, to sanctify you more fully to Himself!

There is something practical in every gift that comes from the Fathers hands and you should pray to Him that you may, by each one, conquer sin, advance in virtue and perfect holiness in His fear. The ultimate end of election is the praise of the glory of Divine Grace, but the immediate and intermediate end is the personal sanctification of the chosen. We are chosen unto holiness! The Father chose us to Himself that we might be without blame before Him in love. He would have us blameless, so that no man can justly find fault with us. He would have us harmless, so that our lives may injure none but bless all. Holiness is, however, more than this. We are called to be made whole by being healed of the disease of sin and by having all our broken powers reunited into one harmonious whole. This restored nature is to be wholly consecrated to God and thus to become holy before God. Oh that we may realize Gods objective in election even at this time and so make our calling and election sure! Let us mightily strive after this and never rest till we have it.

But notice where and what kind of holiness this isholy and blameless before Him. I have met with several people who say they are perfectly holy, but I believe they are under a delusion! And I feel sure that those who watch them will not long think them perfect. This perfection of theirs is according to their own vain ideas and conceited notionsnot according to the judgment of the Lord who searches the heart! Perfection in the flesh is a lie! I believe it to be one of the grossest falsehoods ever palmed on foolish minds! It would be something to be holy and blameless before the devil as Job was. It would be something to be perfect before the eyes of men who are so ready to criticize usbut to be blameless before Him who reads our thoughts and sees our every failure in a momentthis is an attainment of a far higher order!

Oh, to be spotless and faultless! Let us bless God that He is aiming, every day, to make us holy and blameless before Himself! And He will do it, for His purpose never fails. He has worked it, in a large measure, in all His saints, and He will perfect that which He has begun! This is the goal towards which we are running, that we may attain to the complete likeness of Christ. Courage, Brothers and Sisters, it is yet beyond us, but He that has begun the good work in us will perform it unto the day of Christ! We shall, one day, be without fault before the Throne of God!

To conclude, we are to be holy and blameless before Him in love. Love is the anointing oil which is to be poured on all the Lords priestswhen He has robed them in their spotless garments they shall partake of the unction of love. When He has delivered us from all sin, one choice thing shall be seen in us, and that is love, abounding love. God is Love; and He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in Him. As we love, we live unto God. Perfect life will be perfect love. Judge of your sanctification by thisDo you grow in love to God? Do you also increase in love to the Brethren? If your heart grows hard with the proud notion that you are somebody by reason of your high attainments, and that the poor little saints around you are unworthy, even, to unloose the laces of your shoes, you are not growing in holiness!

Do you love poor sinners? For if your heart does not grow tender, you are not growing holy. What a blessed thing it would be to be saturated with love! They said of Basil, that he was a pillar of fire because of his zeal. I wish it could be said of us that we were flames of fire because of our love. Oh, to love our neighbor as ourselves, thinking no evil! Oh, says one, we would be taken advantage of! That would be no harm compared with being hardened by selfishness. But we should be ill-treated and defrauded. Suppose we were? It would be better than being miserly and cruel. The worst of ills is hatethe best of blessings is love. When we become incapable of selfishness and get right away from unkindness of heart and uncharitableness of thought, Christ will be living in us and we in Himand then we shall be fulfilling the purpose of electing love and the design of the innumerable spiritual blessings which are already given us in Christ Jesus.

To this let us all aspire. Let brotherly love continue. Let us love each other more than we have ever done and join our hands anew in a firm league of concord. Let us love the universal Church of Christ. Let our hearts burn with ardent affection towards the perishing multitudes of men, that we may bring them to put their whole trust in Jesus and live! May the Father deal with us according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, and to Father, Son and Holy Spirit be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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BLESSING FOR BLESSING

NO. 2266

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JULY 24, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 26, 1890.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the**

**world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Ephesians 1:3, 4.**

GOD blesses uslet us bless Him! I pray that every heart here may take its own part in this service of praise   
*O you, my Soul, bless God the Lord,   
And all that in me is!   
Be stirred up His holy name   
To magnify and bless!*

Sit in your seats and keep on blessing God from the first word of the sermon to the last. And then go on blessing God till the last hour of life and enter into Heaven into the eternal Glory, still blessing God! It should be our life to bless Him who gave us our life. It should be our delight to bless Him who gives us all our delights. So says the text and so let us say, too Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Our first occupation, at this time, will be that of BLESSING GOD. But how can we bless God? Without doubt the less is blessed of the Greater. Can the Greater be blessed by the less? Yes, but it must be in a modified sense. God blesses us with all spiritual blessings, but we cannot give Him any blessings. He needs nothing at our hands and if He did, we could not give it. If I were hungry, says the Lord, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. God has an all-sufficiency within Himself and can never be thought of as dependent upon His creatures, or as receiving anything from His creatures which He needs to receive. He is already infinitely blessedwe cannot add to His blessedness! When He blesses us, He gives us a blessedness that we never had before but when we bless Himwe cannot, by one iota, increase His absolutely Infinite Perfection! David said to the Lord, My goodness extends not to You. This was as if he had said, Let me be as holy, as devout and as earnest as I may, I can still do nothing for You! You are too high, too holy, too great for me to be really able to bless You in the sense which You bless me.   
How, then, do we bless God? Well, I should say, first, that this language is the expression of gratitude. We say with David, Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and we say with Paul, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can bless God by praising Him, extolling Him, desiring all honor for Him, ascribing all good to Him, magnifying and lauding His holy name! Well, we will do that! Sit still, if you will, and let your heart be silent unto God, for no language can ever express the gratitude that, I trust, we feel to Him who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! Praise Him, also, in your speech. Break the silencespeak of His Glory! Invite others to cry with you, Hallelujah! or Hallels unto Jah! Praise to Jehovah! Ascribe greatness unto our God! Oh, that all flesh would magnify the Lord with us!   
This language is also the utterance of assent to all the blessedness that is ascribed to the Lord. After hearing how great He is, how glorious He is, how happy He is, we bless Him by saying, Amen! So let it be! So would we have it! He is none too great for us, none too blessed for us. Let Him be great, glorious and blessed beyond all conception. I think that we bless God when we say, concerning the whole of His Character, Amen. This God is our God forever and ever. Let Him be just what the Bible says He iswe accept Him as such. Sternly just, He will not spare the guilty. Amen, blessed be His name! Infinitely gracious, ready to forgive. Amen, so let it be! Everywhere present, always Omniscient. Amen, so again do we wish Him to be! Everlastingly the same, unchanging in His Truth, His promise, His Nature. We again say that we are glad of it and we bless Him! He is just such a God as we love! He is, indeed, God to us, because He is really God and we can see that He is so! And every attribute ascribed to Him is a fresh proof to us that Jehovah is the Lord. Thus, we bless Him by adoration!

We also bless God in the spreading of His Kingdom. We can win hearts to Him through His mighty Grace blessing our service. We can fight against evil. We can set up a standard for the Truth of God. We can be willing to suffer in repute and every way else, for His names sake. We can, by His Grace, do all this and thus we are blessing God. Surely, dear Friends, if it is well-pleasing in Gods sight that sinners should repentif it makes Heaven more glad and makes joy in the presence of the angels that men should repentwe are in the best and most practical way blessing God when we labor to bring men to repentance through faith in Christ Jesus!   
There is also another way of blessing God which, I trust, we shall all endeavor to practice, and that is by the doing good to His children. When they are sick, visit them. When they are downcast, comfort them. When they are poor, relieve them. When they are hard pressed by outward adversaries, stand at their side and help them! You cannot bless the Head, but you can bless the feetand when you have refreshed the feet, you have refreshed the Head! He will say, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me. If they are naked and you clothe them. If they are sick and you visit them. If they are hungry and you feed themyou do, in this respect, bless God!   
David not only said, You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to You, but added, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. You can be good to them and in that respect you may be blessing God! He has done so much for us that we would gladly do something for Him and when we have reached the limit of our possibilities, we long to do more! We wish that we had more money to give, more talent to use, more time that we could devote to His cause. We wish that we had more heart and more brain! Sometimes we wish that we had more tongue and we sing   
*Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing   
My great Redeemers praise!*   
This word, blessed, is an attempt to break the narrow circle of our capacity. It is an earnest endeavor of a burning heart to lay at Gods feet crowns of glory which it cannot findBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.   
II. But now, secondly, we shall spend a little time in VIEWING GOD in the light in which Paul sets Him before usBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.   
We bless the God of Nature. What beauties He has strewn around us! We bless the God of Providence. How bountifully does He send us harvests and fruitful seasons! We bless the God of Grace who has redeemed us and adopted us as His children. But here is a peculiar aspect of God which should call forth our highest praisesHe is called the God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ.   
When we see God in connection with Christ, we see God through Christ. When we see God in Christ, then our hearts are all aflame and we burst out with, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God apart from Christthat is a great and glorious themebut the human mind fails to grasp it. The infinite Jehovah, who can conceive Him? Our God is a consuming fire. Who can draw near to Him? But in the Mediator, in the Person of the God, the Man in whom we find blended human sympathy and Divine Glory, we can draw near to God. There it is that we get our hands upon the golden harp strings and resolve that every string shall be struck to the praise of God in Christ Jesus!   
But note carefully that God is described here as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus knelt in prayer, He prayed to our God! When Jesus leaned in faith upon the promises, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. When our Savior sang on the Passover night, the song was unto God. When He prayed in Gethsemane, with bloody sweat, the prayer was unto our God. Jesus said to Mary at the sepulcher, Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God. How we ought to bless God when we think that He is the God whom our Redeemer blesses! This is the God who said of Christ, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Delightful thought! When I approach Jehovah, I approach the God or our Lord Jesus Christ! Surely, when I see His blood-stained footprints there on the ground before me, though I take my shoes off from my feet, for the place is holy ground, yet I follow with confidence where my Friend, my Savior, my Husband, my Head has been before meand I rejoice as I worship the God of our Lord Jesus Christ!   
He is also called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great mystery. Think not that we shall ever understand the high relationship between the First and Second Persons of the blessed Trinity, the Father and the Son. We speak of Eternal Sonship, which is a term that does not convey to us any great meaningit simply covers up our ignorance. How God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as God, we do not know and, perhaps, to wish to gaze into this tremendous mystery were as great a folly as to look at the sun and blind ourselves with its brilliance! It is so that ought to be enough for us. God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ as to His Divine NatureYou are My Son; this day I have begotten You. He is also His Father as to the Human side of His Nature. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. That body of His, that Human Life, came of Godnot of Joseph, not of man. Born of a woman, God sent forth His Son; but He was His Son then. It was Gods Son that was born at Bethlehem. Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary, That holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.   
Now, take the two Natures of their wondrous blending in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you see how the great God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, sweet thought, He is my Father, too! My Father is Christs Father! Jesus Christs Father is our Father and He teaches us all to call Him, Our Father, which are in Heaven. Often in prayer, He said, Father. And He bids us say the same, putting the plural pronoun before it, Our Father. Now will you not bless the Lord, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you not feel a glowing in your hearts, as you think of the near and dear relationship into which you are brought through Jesus Christ? The God of Jesus Christ, the Father of Jesus Christ, is my God, my Father, too! Blessed, blessed, blessed, forever blessed be that dear name!   
III. Our third occupation, at this time, is that of RECOUNTING HIS GREAT MERCIES. I will read the rest of the third verseBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.   
This recapitulation of mercies is written with full assurance and you will not bless God unless you have a touch of that same experience. Paul does not say, Who has, we hope and trust, blessed us, but he writes, Who has blessed us. Ah, Beloved, if you have a full assurance that God has blessed you in Christ, and that now His smile rests upon you, and all the benisons of the Covenant are stored there for you, I think that you cannot help saying, Blessed, blessed be the name of the Most High! That doubt, that tremblingthis it is that empties out the marrow from the bone of our blessedness. If you have suspicions about the Truth of this precious Book. If you have questions about the Truth of the Doctrines of Grace. If you have doubts about your own interest in these things, I do not wonder that you do not praise Godfor a blessing which is only mine by perhaps, well, perhaps I shall be grateful for itbut perhaps I shall not. But if I know whom I have believed. If I have a firm grip of spiritual mercies. If all heavenly things are mine in Christ, my Lord, I can sing, Wake up, my Glory! Awake psaltery and harp! I myself will awake right early. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.   
With this full assurance should come intense delightWho has blessed us. God has blessed us. Come, Brothers and Sisters, He has not done some trifle for us which we can afford to ignore! He has not merely given us some absolutely necessary blessings which we must have, for we could not live without them! But He has, in Grace, dealt still more abundantly with us! He has gone beyond workhouse fare and made us a feast with saints and princes! He has given us more than home-spun garmentsHe has put upon us robes of beauty and of gloryeven His own spotless Righteousness! He has blessed uswe are blessedwe feel that we are. Each Believer can say   
*I feel like singing all the time,   
For my tears are wiped away!   
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,   
Ill praise Him every day.   
Ill praise Him! Praise Him!   
Praise Him all the time!*   
We are not sitting here groaning and cryingfretting and worryingand questioning our own salvation. He has blessed us and, therefore, we will bless Him! If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for Him. But if you have a great notion of His great mercy to you, you will be greatly grateful to you gracious God.   
Let me also remark, next, that as assurance and delight lead to blessing God, so does a right understanding of His mercies. To help your understanding, notice what Paul saysBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. An enlightened man is grateful to God for temporal blessings, but he is much more grateful to God for spiritual blessings, for temporal blessings do not last longthey are soon gone. Temporal blessings are not definite marks of Divine favor, since God gives them to the unworthy and to the wicked, as well as to the righteous. The corn, wine and oil are for Divesand Lazarus gets even less than his share. Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessingsthey are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for

spiritual blessings! A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land! God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings! These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessingsthey are priceless in value. Therefore, let me beg you to join in blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed you with spiritual blessings.   
But did you notice the word, all? I must bring that out clearly. I must turn the microscope on it. Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. Surely Paul means that we have not one spiritual blessing which God did not give. We have never earned onewe could never create one. All spiritual blessings come from the Father! He has really given us all spiritual blessings. I have not received them, says one. That is your own fault! He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. A new heart, a tender conscience, a submissive will, faith, hope, love, patiencewe have all these in Christ. Regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, perfection are all in Christ. If we do not take them out, it is the fault of our palsied hands that have not strength enough to grasp them! But He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ.   
Whenever you read your Bible, and see a great promise, do not hesitate to claim it! He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ. I am afraid, says one, that I should be presuming if I took some of the promises. He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ! You are in your Fathers houseyou cannot steal, for your Father saysHelp yourself to what you like. He has made over His whole estate of spiritual wealth to every believing child of His! Therefore take freely and you will, by doing so, glorify God! He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.   
This He has done in the heavenly places. What does that mean, Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places? Does it not mean that He is working upon us all spiritual blessings out of Heaven where He dwells? Or does it mean much more, that He is sending us all these spiritual blessings to bring us to the Heaven where He dwells and where He would have us dwell?   
I want to stir up your heart by reminding you that all the spiritual blessings we receive are the richer and rarer because they are given to us in Christ. Here are the blessings and Christ is the golden case that holds them all. When the City of London makes a man a freeman of the city, the document giving him his liberty is usually presented to him enclosed in a golden case. Christ is that golden case in which we find the charter of our eternal liberty. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. If they came to us any other way, we might lose themor we might not be sure that they were genuine. But when they come to us in Christ, they come to stay, and we know that they are real. If Christ is mine, all blessings in heavenly places are mine!   
I seem, to myself, to be talking very dryly of things that ought to be swimming in a sea of joy and delight. Beloved, do not let my faint words rob my Lord of any of His Glory! He has done such great things for you bless His name! We cannot stand up and ask for instruments of music with which to sound His praise, but we can sit still and each one say, Blessed be His name! It is all true! He has blessed meI know that He has! He has blessed me with a liberal hand with all spiritual blessings. He has blessed me just where I needed blessing, where I was poorest in spiritual things. I could make my way in business, but I could not make my own way in Grace, so He has blessed me with all spiritual blessings, and He has made the garments all the dearer because of the wardrobe in which He has hung them! He has given me these royal things in Christ and as I look to my dear Lord and see what there is for me stored up in Him, I prize each thing the more because it is in Him. Come, Holy Spirit, set our hearts on fire with blessing and praise to God for all the great things that He has done for us!   
IV. I shall close with this fourth remarkLet us bless God, BEHOLDING THE MANNER OF HIS GIFTS. That is described in the fourth verse According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.   
Now, Brothers and Sisters, we are to praise God because all spiritual blessings have come to us in the same way as our election came, according as He has chosen us in Him. How did that come? Well, it came of His Free, Sovereign Grace. He loved us because He would love us! He chose us because He chose us. You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you. If there is any virtue. If there is any praise in us nowHe put it there. To the bottomless abyss of His own infinite goodness we must trace the election of His Grace. Well, now, every blessing comes to us in the same way. God has not blessed you, my Brothers and Sisters, with usefulness because you deserved it, but because of His Grace. He did not redeem you, or regenerate you, or sanctify you, or uphold you because of anything in you. Again and again, by the Prophet Ezekiel, did the Lord remind His ancient people that the blessings He bestowed upon them were all gifts of His Grace. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy names sake. And again, Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Every blessing comes to us with the hallmark of Sovereign Grace upon it! As the Lord distributed the gifts of His Grace, He said, May I not do as I will with My own? He does so and we bless and praise, and adore the sovereign Grace of God which, having chosen us, continues to bless us according as He has chosen us in Christ!   
Next, we have to bless God that all His gifts come to us in Christ. Notice Pauls words, according as He has chosen us in Him. God called us in Christ. He justified us in Christ. He sanctified us in Christ. He will perfect us in Christ. He will glorify us in Christ. We have everything in Christ and we have nothing apart from Christ. Let us praise and bless the name of the Lord that this sacred channel of His Grace is as glorious as the Grace itself! There is as much Grace in the gift of Christ to save us as there is in the salvation which Christ has worked out for us. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.   
Again, all our blessings come from the Divine purpose. ListenWho has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him. No spiritual blessing comes to any man by chance. No man gets a blessing from God through his good luckit all comes according to the eternal purpose of God which He purposed before the earth was

*Long before the suns refulgent ray   
Primeval shades of darkness drove,   
They on His sacred bosom lay,   
Loved with an everlasting love.*

Before the foundation of the world, says the textthere was a purpose in the heart of Godand in that purpose we were chosen! And by that same purpose God continues to bless us. Look, Beloved, God never gives His people either a gift or a Grace without His purpose. Has God given you a clear brain, quick, capacious? Think for Him! Has God given you a tongue fluent, eloquent? Speak for Him! He does not give you these gifts without purpose. Has God given you influence among your fellow men? Use it for Him! Your election came according to His purpose and so have all your gifts, and much more, all your Graces. Have you a strong, brighteyed faith? Have you burning zeal? Have you vehement love? Have you any of these gifts of the Covenant? Use them for a purpose! God has given them for a purposefind out what that purpose is and glorify God thereby!

Lastly, the text tells us that God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the worldthat we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Gods choice of us was not because we were holy, but to make us holyand Gods purpose will not be fulfilled unless we are made holy. Some people, when they talk about salvation, mean escaping from Hell and getting into Heaven by the skin of their teeth. We never mean any such thing! We mean deliverance from evil, deliverance from sin!

I often wonder why some people grumble because God has chosen to deliver others from sin when they, themselves, do not want to be delivered from sin. Like a dog in the manger, they cannot eat the hay, themselves, and they growl at those who can. If you wish to be safe from sin, ask God for that great blessing and He will give it to you! But if you do not want it, do not complain if God says, I shall give it to such and such a person, and you that do not even ask for it shall be left without it. If you do not care to be holy, you shall not be holy! If you did care for it and wished for it, you might have it, for God denies it to none who seek it at His hands. But if you neither wish for it, nor value it, why do you lift your puny fist against the God of Heaven because He has chosen others, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love?

The objective of our election is our holiness and the objective of every spiritual blessing is our holiness! God is aiming at making us holy. Are you not glad of that? May I not say, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because His aim in every gift is to make us holy? Brothers and Sisters, would we not sacrifice everything we have and count it no sacrifice if we might be perfectly holy? I said to a young girl who came to join the Church, Mary, are you perfect? She looked at me and said, No, Sir. I said, Would you like to be? Oh, that I would! I long for it. I cry for it. Surely, the God who makes us long to be perfect has already worked a great work in us! And if we can say that to be perfect would be Heaven to us, then we are already on the road to Heavenand God is working out in us His eternal purpose, which is, that we should be holy.

There is one thing moreThat we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Does that mean that we are to be loving, full of love and without blame in that matter? Well, I am afraid that there are not very many Christians who are without blame on the score of love. I know a man, a noble man intellectually and, in some respects, spiritually. I believe that he would die at the stake for the grand old Calvinistic faith, but he is as hard as iron. You cannot feel any kind of love to him, for he does not feel any kind of love to anybody else. That man is not without blame before God in love. I have known otherswonderful Christians they appear to bethey could pray for a week. But if you are poor and ask them for a little help, your asking will all be in vain! I do not think that they are without blame before God in love. O Brothers and Sisters, God has chosen us to be loving! He has ordained us to be loving and all the innumerable blessings which He has given us, He sends to win us to a loving spirit that we may be without blame in that matter!

Our dear Friend, Mr. William Olney, whom we still remember, here, and never can forget, was, I think, without blame in that matter of love. I sometimes thought that he used to shed his love on some who might have been the better for a hard wordfor they were deceiversbut he could not bring his mind to think that anybody could be a deceiver. And if anybody was in need of help, no matter though their own misconduct had brought them into poverty, his hand was in his pocket and out again, very quickly, with help for them! He never failed in love and I pray that you and I, with prudence and wisdom mixed with it, may be without blame before God in the matter of love. Love your fellow Christians. Love poor sinners to Christ! Love those that despitefully use you. Love those round about you who are strangers to the love of God. It may be that they will see in your love some little image of the love of God, as in a drop of water you may sometimes see the sun and the heavens reflected. God make us to be reflections of the love of God! His purpose is that we may be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Now, I have set before you a rare treasury. Does this treasury belong to you? My dear Hearers, is Christ yours? Are you trusting Him? If not, there is nothing yours! Without Christ you can do nothing and you are nothingand you have nothing. Come to Jesus as you are and put your trust in Him, and then all things are yours! If Christ is yours, Beloved, then I charge you, bless the Lord, yes, bless the Lord again and again, for you will never bless Him as much as He deserves to be blessed! Let us finish this service as we closed our worship this morning, by singing the doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.** EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **EPHESIANS 1.**

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a complete Body of Divinity. In the first chapter you have the doctrines of the Gospel. In the next, you have the experience of the Christians and, before the Epistle is finished, you have the precepts of the Christian faith. Whoever would see Christianity in one treatise, let him, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Epistle to the Ephesians!

1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus; Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. All down through the ages this benediction comes to us, even to as many of us as are the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you, Brothers and SistersGrace in every form of it, the free favor of Godall that active force of Grace which comes of His unmerited love! May you have a fresh draught of it at this time! And peace. May you feel a deep peace with God with your own conscience and with all the world! Oh, that you might find an atmosphere of quiet calm about your mind at this very moment! The double blessing of Grace and peace comes from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3, 4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. One of the first doctrines of our holy faith is that of the union of all believing souls with Christ. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Apart from Christ we are nothing! In Christ we have all spiritual blessings. We are rich as Christ is rich when we are united to Him by the living bond of faith. Another great doctrine of Holy Scripture is that of Election. We are blessed in Christ according as the Father has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. Why did God choose any unto eternal life? Was it because of any holiness in them then existing, or foreseen to exist? No, by no means, for we read thatAccording as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,

4. That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. We are chosen, not because we are holy, but that we may be made holy. The election precedes the character and is, indeed, the moving cause in producing the character. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. You see, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, the end for which the Lord, by his Grace, chose you!

5. Having predestinated us. Having destined us before we were born,   
5. Unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. The chosen ones are adoptedthey become the children of God. The universal Fatherhood of God, except in a very special sense, is a doctrine totally unknown to Scripture! God is the Father of those whom He adopts into His family, who are born again into His familyand no man has any right to believe God to be his Father except through the new birth and through adoption. And why God thus elects or adopts is declared hereAccording to the good pleasure of His will. He does as He pleases. That old Word of God is still trueI will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Men do not like that Doctrine of Godit galls them terriblybut it is the Truth of God for all that! He is Master and King and He will sit on the Throne and none shall drag Him from there.   
6. To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. There is another precious Doctrine of God, the acceptance of those who are adopted. We are beloved of GodHe has a complacency toward us! He takes a delight in us! We are acceptable in His sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! But remember that it is all in Christ Accepted in the Beloved. Because Christ is accepted, therefore those who are in Him are accepted.   
7, 8. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. In the working out of the economy of Grace, God has been lavish with His love, but yet there have been wisdom and prudence in it. He did not suffer the full light of the Gospel to break in upon our eyes at first, lest we should have been blinded by it. Jesus had many things to say unto His disciples, but they could not bear them all at once, so, little by little, He has led us on and led us up, abounding always in His Grace and only limiting the display of it by our capacity to receive it!   
9, 10. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all thing in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. Everything that is in Christ shall be gathered in! All His chosen, all that the Father gave Him, all that He has redeemed by blood, all that He has effectually brought into union with Himself shall be gathered together in one! There shall be one flock under one Shepherd.   
11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance. Not only shall we have it, but we have it now! We have Heaven in the price of it, in the principles of it, in the promise of it, in the foretaste of it.   
11, 12. Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. The enmity of mens hearts to this Doctrine of Predestination was seen in the House of Commons but a fortnight ago, when one, who ought to have known better, talked about the gloomy tenets of Calvin. I know nothing of Calvins gloomy tenets! But I do know that I read, here, of predestination and I read, here, that God has His own way and His own willand that He reigns and rulesand so He will until the worlds end! And all who are loyal subjects wish God to rule. He is a traitor who would not have God to be King, for who is infinitely good and kind as God is? Let Him have His Divine will. Who wishes to restrain Him? Whether we wish it or not, however, the Lord reigns! Let the earth rejoice and let His adversaries tremble! Our predestination is according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.   
13, 14. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His Glory. Those who believe in Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling in themthe Holy Spirit is a part of Heaventhe earnest of our inheritance. And wherever He dwells, it is not possible that the heart should lose the inheritance! It is entailed upon those in whom the Spirit dwells. Judge, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, whether the Spirit of God dwells in you or not.   
15-23. Why I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believe; according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things in the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. How Paul glows as He writes on this great theme! He waxes warm and rises to an enthusiasm of eloquence! We could not stop to explain his wordsthat were to spoil their mystic poetry! Oh, to have a heart that can glorify Christ as Paul did! Truly, if we know ourselves to be one with Christ and know the privileges which come to us through that blessed gate, we may, indeed, extol Him with all our heart and soul!

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 232; Psalm 53, Version 1; 219 and the Doxology.  
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ADOPTION   
NO. 360

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 10, 1861 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Ephesians 1:5.

It is at once a doctrine of Scripture and of common sense that whatever God does in time He predestined to do in eternity. Some men find fault with divine predestination and challenge the justice of eternal decrees. Now if they remember that predestination is the counterfoil of history as an architectural planthe carrying out of which we read in the facts that happenthey may perhaps obtain a slight clue to the unreasonableness of their hostility.

I never heard anyone among professors wantonly and willfully find fault with Gods dealings, yet I have heard some who would even dare to call in question the equity of His counsels. If the thing itself is right, it must be right that God intended to do the thing. If you find no fault with facts, as you see them in Providence, you have no ground to complain of decrees, as you find them in predestinationfor the decrees and the facts are just the counterparts one of the other. Have you any reason to find fault with God that He has been pleased to save you and save me? Then why should you find fault because Scripture says he pre-determined that He would save us?

I cannot see, if the fact itself is agreeable, why the decree should be objectionable. I can see no reason why you should find fault with Gods foreordination if you do not find fault with what does actually happen as the effect of it. Let a man but agree to acknowledge an act of Providence and I want to know how he can, except he runs in the very teeth of Providence, find any fault with the predestination or intention that God made concerning that Providence.

Will you blame me for preaching this morning? Suppose you answer, No. Then can you blame me that I formed a resolution last night that I would preach? Will you blame me for preaching on this particular subject? Do, if you please, then and find me guilty for intending to do so. But if you say I am perfectly right in selecting such a subject, how can you say I was not perfectly right in intending to preach upon it? Assuredly you cannot find fault with Gods predestination if you do not find fault with the effects that immediately spring from it.

Now we are taught in Scripture, I affirm again, that all things that God chose to do in time were most certainly intended by Him to be done in eternity and He predestined such things should be done. If I am called, I believe God intended before all worlds that I should be called. If in His

mercy He has regenerated me I believe that from all eternity He intended to regenerate me. And if in His loving-kindness He shall at last perfect me and carry me to Heaven, I believe it always was His intention to do so. If you cannot find fault with the thing itself that God does, in the name of reason, common sense and Scripture, how dare you find fault with Gods intention to do it?

But there are one or two acts of God which, while they certainly are decreed as much as other things, yet they bear such a special relation to Gods predestination that it is rather difficult to say whether they were done in eternity or whether they were done in time. Election is one of those things which was done absolutely in eternity. All who were elect, were elect as much in eternity as they are in time. But you may say, Does the like affirmation apply to adoption or justification? My late eminent and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, diligently studying these doctrines said that adoption was the act of God in eternity and that as all believers were elect in eternity, so beyond a doubt they were adopted in eternity.

He further stated that included the doctrine of justification and he said that inasmuch as Jesus Christ was before all worlds justified by His Father and accepted by Him as our representative, therefore all the elect must have been justified in Christ from before all worlds. Now I believe there is a great deal of truth in what he said, though there was a considerable outcry raised against him at the time he first uttered it. However, that being a high and mysterious point, we would have you accept the doctrine that all those who are saved at last were elect in eternity when the means as well as the end were determined.

With regard to adoption I believe we were predestined hereunto in eternity, but I do think there are some points with regard to adoption which will not allow me to consider the act of adoption to have been completed in eternity. For instance, the positive translation of my soul from a state of nature into a state of grace is a part of adoption or at least it is an effect of it and so close an effect that it really seems to be a part of adoption itselfI believe that this was designed and in fact that it was virtually carried out in Gods Everlasting Covenant. I think that it was then actually brought to pass in all its fullness.

So with regard to justification, I must hold that in the moment when Jesus Christ paid my debts, my debts were cancelledin the hour when He worked out for me a perfect righteousness it was imputed to me and therefore I may as a believer say I was complete in Christ before I was bornaccepted in Jesus, even as Levi was blessed in the loins of Abraham by Melchisedec. But I know likewise that justification is described in the Scriptures as passing upon me at the time I believe. Being justified by faith, I am told, I have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. I think, therefore that adoption and justification, while they have a very great alliance with eternity and were virtually done then, yet have both of them such a near relation to us in time and such a bearing upon our own personal standing and character that they have also a part and parcel of themselves actually carried out and performed in time in the heart of every believer.

I may be wrong in this exposition. It requires much more time to study this subject than I have been able yet to give to it seeing that my years are not yet many. I shall no doubt by degrees come to the knowledge more fully of such high and mysterious points of Gospel doctrine. But nevertheless, while I find the majority of sound Divines holding that the works of justification and adoption are due in our lives, I see, on the other hand, in Scripture much to lead me to believe that both of them were done in eternity.

And I think the fairest view of the case is that while they were virtually done in eternity, yet both adoption and justification are actually passed upon us in our proper persons, consciences and experiences, in timeso that both the Westminster confession and the idea of Dr. Gill can be proved to be Scriptural. We may hold them both without any prejudice the one to the other.

Well now, Beloved, leaving then the predestination, let us come to as full a consideration as the hour shall enable us to give of the doctrine of the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself; according to the good pleasure of His will.

First, then, adoption the grace of God displayed in it. Secondly, adoptionthe privileges which it brings. Thirdly, adoptionthe duties which it necessarily places upon every adopted child.

I. First, ADOPTIONTHE GRACE OF IT.   
Adoption is that act of God whereby men who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are from no reason in themselves, but entirely of the pure grace of God, translated out of the evil and black family of Satan and brought actually and virtually into the family of God. They take His name, share the privileges of sorts and they are to all intents and purposes the actual offspring and children of God.   
This is an act of pure grace. No man can ever have a right in himself to become adopted. If I had, then I should receive the inheritance in my own rightbut inasmuch as I have no right whatever to be a child of God and can by no possibility claim so high a privilege in and of myself, adoption is the pure gratuitous effect of divine grace and of that alone. I could suppose that justification might be by works under the Old Covenant, but I could not suppose adoption to be under the Old Covenant at all. I could imagine a man keeping the law perfectly and being justified by it, if Adam had not fallen. But even upon such a supposition, Adam himself would have had no right to adoptionhe would still have been only a servant and not a son.  
Above all contradiction and controversy that great and glorious act whereby God makes us of His family and unites us to Jesus Christ as our Covenant Head, so we may be His childrenis an act of pure grace. It would have been an act of sovereign grace if God had adopted someone out of the best of families. But in this case he has adopted one who was a child and a rebel. We are by nature the children of one who was convicted of high treason. We are all the heirs and are born into the world the natural heirs of one who sinned against his Maker, who was a rebel against his Lord.  
Yet mark thisnotwithstanding the evil of our parentage, born of a thief, who stole the fruit from his masters gardenborn of a proud traitor, who dared to rebel against his Godnotwithstanding all thisGod has put us into the family. We can well conceive that when God considered our vile original He might have said within Himself, How can I put you among the children? With what gratitude should we remember that though we were of the very lowest original, grace has put us into the number of the Saviors family. Let us give all thanks to the free grace which overlooked the hole of the pit from where we were dug. And which passed over the quarry from where we were hewn and put us among the chosen people of the living God.

If a king should adopt any into his family it would likely be the son of one of his lordsat any rate some child of respectable parentage. He would not take the son of some common felon, or some gypsy child, to adopt him into his family. But God in this case has taken the very worst to be His children. The sons of God all confess that they are the last persons they should ever have dreamed He would have chosen. They say of themselves   
*What was there in us that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?   
Twas Even so, Father, we ever must sing, Because it seemed good in Your sight.*   
Again, let us think not only of our original lineage, but of our personal character. He who knows himself will never think that he had much to recommend him to God. In other cases of adoption there usually is some recommendation. A man, when he adopts a child, sometimes is moved thereto by its extraordinary beauty, or at other times by its intelligent manners and winning disposition. But, Beloved, when God passed by the field in which we were lying, He saw no tears in our eyes till He put them there Himself. He saw no contrition in us until He had given us repentance. There was no beauty in us that could induce Him to adopt uson the contrary we were everything that was repulsive.   
And if He had said, when He passed by, You are cursed, be lost forever, it would have been nothing but what we might have expected from a God who had been so long provoked and whose majesty had been so terribly insulted. But no. He found a rebellious child, a filthy, frightful, ugly child. He took it to His bosom and said, Black though you are, you are comely in My eyes through My Son Jesus. Unworthy though you are, yet I cover you with His robe and in your Brothers garments I accept you. And taking us, all unholy and unclean, just as we were, He took us to be His His childrenHis forever.   
I was passing lately by the seat of a nobleman and someone in the railway carriage observed that he had no children and he would give any price in the world if he could find someone who would renounce all claim to any son he might have. The child was never to speak to his parents any more, nor to be acknowledged and this lord would adopt him as his son and leave him the whole of his estates. But he had found great difficulty in procuring any parents who would forswear their relationship and entirely give up their child.   
Whether this was correct or not, I cannot tell. But certainly this was not the case with God. His only-Begotten and well-Beloved Son was quite enough for Him. And if He had needed a family, there were the angels and His own Omnipotence was adequate enough to have created a race of beings far superior to us. He stood in no need whatever of any to be His darlings. It was, then, an act of simple, pure, gratuitous graceand of nothing elsebecause He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and because He delights to show the marvelous character of His condescension.   
Did you ever think what a high honor it is to be called a son of God? Suppose a judge of the land should have before him some traitor who was about to be condemned to die. Suppose that equity and law demanded that the wretch should shed his blood by some terrible punishment. But suppose it were possible for the judge to step from his throne and to say, Rebel you are guilty, but I have found out a way whereby I can forgive your rebellionsman, you are pardoned! There is a flush of joy upon his cheek. Man, you are made rich!see, there is wealth!   
Another smile passes over the countenance. Man, you are made so strong that you shall be able to resist all your enemies! He rejoices again. Man, says the judge at last, you are made a prince! You are adopted into the royal family and you shall one day wear a crown. You are now as much the son of God as you are the son of your own father. You can conceive the poor creature fainting with joy at such a thought, that he whose neck was just ready for the halter should have his head now ready for a crownthat he who expected to be clothed in the felons garb and taken away to death, is now to be exalted and clothed in robes of honor.   
So, Christian, think what you did deserverobes of shame and infamybut you are to have those of glory. Are you in Gods family now? Well said the poet   
*It does not yet appear,   
How great we must be made.*   
We do not know the greatness of adoption yet. Yes, I believe that even in eternity we shall scarce be able to measure the infinite depth of the love of God in that one blessing of adoption by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Still, methinks there is someone here who says, I believe, Sir, that men are adopted because God foresees that they will be holy, righteous and faithful and therefore, doubtless, God adopted them on the foresight of that.   
That is an objection I often have to reply to. Suppose, my Friends, you and I should take a journey into the country one day and should meet with a person and should say to him, Sir, can you tell me why the sails of yonder windmill go round? He would of course reply, It is the wind. But, suppose you were to ask him, What makes the wind? and he were to reply, the sails of the windmill, would you not just think that he was an idiot? In the first place, he told you that the wind caused the revolution of the sails and then, afterwards, he tells you that the sails make the windthat an effect can be the parent of that which is its own cause!   
Now, any man you like to ask will say that faith is the gift of Godthat good works are Gods workmanship. Well, then, what is the cause of good works in a Christian? Why, grace, they say. Then, how can good works be the cause of grace? By all that is rational, where are your heads? It is too foolish a supposition for any man to reply to without making you laugh and that I do not choose to do. And therefore, I leave it. I say again, Beloved, if the fruits upon a Christian be caused by the root, how can the fruit, in any degree, be the cause of the root? If the good works of any man are given him by grace, how can they, by any pretense whatever, be argued as the reason why God gives him grace?   
The fact is we are by nature utterly lost and ruined and there is not a saint in Heaven that would not have been damned and that did not deserve to be damned in the common doom of sinners. The reason why God has made a distinction is a secret to Himself. He had a right to make that distinction if He pleased and He has done it. He has chosen some unto eternal life, to the praise of His glorious grace. He has let others to be punished for their sins, to the praise of His glorious justice and in one as in the other, He has acted quite rightly, for He has a right to do as He wills with His own creatures. Seeing they all deserved to be punished, He has a right to punish them all.   
So too, as He has reconciled justice with mercy or mated it with judgment He has a right to forgive and pardon some and to leave the others to be unwashed, unforgiven and unsavedwillfully to follow the error of their ways, to reject Christ, despise His Gospel and ruin their own souls. He that does not agree with that, agrees not with Scripture. I have not to prove itI have only to preach it. He that quarrels with that, quarrels with Godlet him fight his quarrel out himself.   
II. The second thing is, THE PRIVILEGES WHICH COME TO US THROUGH ADOPTION.  
For the convenience of my young peoplemembers of the ChurchI shall, just for a moment, give you a list of the privileges of adoption as they are to be found in our old Confession of Faith. I know many of you have this book and I am sure most of you will study at home this afternoon if you have opportunity, looking up all the passages. It is the Twelfth Article, upon adoption, where we readAll those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God, have His name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the Throne of Grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for and chastened by Him as a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.   
I shall commence, then, with the privileges of adoption. There is one privilege not mentioned in the Confession which ought to be there. It is thisWhen a man is adopted into a family and comes thereby under the regime of his new father, he has nothing whatever to do with the old family he has left behind and he is released from subjection to those whom he has left. And so, the moment I am taken out of the family of Satan, the Prince of this world has nothing to do with me as my father and he is no more my father. I am not a son of Satan, I am not a child of wrath. The moment I am taken out of the legal family, I have nothing whatever to do with Hagar.   
If Hagar comes to meddle with me, I tell her, Sarah is my mother, Abraham is my father and, Hagar, you are my servant and I am not yours. You are a bondwoman and I shall not be your bond slave, for you are mine. When the Law comes to a Christian with all its terrible threats and horrible denunciations, the Christian says, Law! why do you threaten me? I have nothing to do with you. I follow you as my rule, but I will not have you to be my ruler. I take you to be my pattern and mold, because I cannot find a better code of morality and of life, but I am not under you as my condemning curse.   
Sit in your Judgment-seat, O Law and condemn me. I smile on you, for you are not my judge, I am not under your jurisdiction. You have no right to condemn me. If, as the old Divines say, the king of Spain were to condemn an inhabitant of Scotland what would he say? He would say, Very well, condemn me, if you like, but I am not under your jurisdiction. So, when the Law condemns a saint, the saint says, If my Father condemns me and chastens me, I bow to Him with filial submission for I have offended Him, but, O Law, I am not under you any longer, I am delivered from you, I will not hear your sentence, nor care about your thunders.

All you can do against me, go and do it upon Christ. Or, rather, you have done it. If you demand punishment for my sin, look, there stands my Substitute. You are not to seek it at my hands. You charge me with guilt. It is true, I am guilty, but it is equally true my guilt is put upon the Scapegoats head. I tell you, I am not of your family. I am not to be chastened by you. I will not have a legal chastisement, a legal punishment. I am under the Gospel dispensation now, I am not under you. I am a child of God, not your servant. We have a commandment to obey the Father that we now have. But as to the family with which we were connected, we have nothing to do with it any longer. That is no small privilegeoh that we could rightly understand it and appreciate it and walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free!   
But now, as the Confession has it, one of the great blessings which God gives us is that we have His name put upon us. He will give unto us a new name, as is the promise in the book of the Revelation. We are to be called after the name of God. Oh, Remember, Brothers and Sisters, we are men and women, but we are Gods men and women now. We are no longer mere mortals. We are so in ourselvesbut by divine grace we are chosen immortalsGods sons, taken to Himself. Remember, Christian, you bear the name of God upon you.   
Mark another thing. We have the spirit of children as well as the name of children. Now, if one man adopts another child into his family, he cannot give it his own nature, as his own child would have had. And if that child that he shall adopt should have been a fool, it may still remain so he cannot make it a child worthy of him. But our heavenly Father, when He comes to carry out adoption, gives us not only the name of children, but the nature of children, too. He gives us a nature like His well-Beloved Son Jesus Christ. We had once a nature like our father Adam after he had sinned. He takes that away and gives us a nature like Himself as it were in the image of God.   
He overcomes the old nature and He puts in us the nature of children. He sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And He gives us the nature and the character of children, so that we are as much by grace partakers of the spirit of children of God as we should have been if we had been His legitimately born children and had not been adopted into His family. Brethren, adoption secures to us regeneration. And regeneration secures to us the nature of children whereby we are not only made children, but are made partakers of the grace of Godso that we are in ourselves made unto God by our new nature as living children, actually and really like Himself.   
The next blessing is that being adopted we have access to the Throne. When we come to Gods Throne, one thing we ought always to plead is our adoption. The angel that keeps the mercy seat might stop us on the road with saying, What is your claim to come here? Do you come as a subject, or a servant? If you do, you have no right to come. But if you come as a son, come and welcome. Can you say you are a son in your prayers, Christian? Then never be afraid to pray. So long as you know your sonship you will be sure to get all you want, for you can say, Father, I ask not as a servant. If I were a servant I should expect Your wages and knowing that as a servant I have been rebellious, I should expect wages of eternal wrath.   
But I am Your son. Though as a servant I have often violated Your rules and may expect Your rod, yet, O Father, sinner though I be in and of myself, I am Your son by adoption and grace. Spurn me not away. Put me not from Your knee. I am Your own child. I plead it. The Spirit bears witness with my Spirit that I am born of God. Father, will You deny Your son? What? When you plead for your elder Brothers sake, by whom you are Gods child, being made an heir with Christ of all things, will He drive away His son? No, Beloved, He will not. He will turn again, He will hear our prayer, He will have mercy upon us. If we are His children we may have access with boldness to the grace wherein we stand and access with confidence unto the Throne of the heavenly grace.   
Another blessing is that we are pitied by God. Think of that, children, in all your sufferings and sorrows. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. Do you lie sick? The Lord stands by your bedside, pitying you. Are you tempted of Satan? Christ is looking down upon you, feeling in His heart your sighs and your groans. Did you come here this morning with a heavy heart, a desponding spirit? Remember, the loving heart of God sympathizes with you. In His measure, Christ feels afresh what every member bears. He pities you and that pity of God is one of the efforts that flows into your heart by your adoption.   
In the next place, He protects you. Just as a hen protects her brood under her feathers from birds of prey that seek their life, so the Lord makes His own loving arms encircle His children. No father will allow his son to die without making some attempt to resist the adversary who would slay him. God will never allow His children to perish while His omnipotence is able to guard them. If once that everlasting arm can be palsied, if once that everlasting hand can become less than Almighty, then you may die. But while your Father lives, your Fathers shield shall be your preserver and His strong arm shall be your effectual protection.   
Once again, there is provision as well as protection. Every father will take care to the utmost of his ability to provide for his children. So will God. If you are adopted, being predestinated thereunto, most surely will He provide for you  
*All needful grace will God bestow,   
And crown that grace with glory too;   
He gives us all things and withholds   
No real good from upright souls.*   
Mercies temporal, mercies spiritual you shall have and all because you are Gods son, His redeemed child, made so by the blood of Jesus Christ.   
And then you shall likewise have education. God will educate all His children till He makes them perfect men in Christ Jesus. He will teach you doctrine after doctrine. He will lead you into all Truth until at last, perfected in all heavenly wisdom, you shall be made fit to join with your fellow-commoners of the great Heaven above.   
There is also one thing, perhaps, you sometimes forget which you are sure to have in the course of discipline if you are Gods sons and that is Gods rod. That is another fruit of adoption. Unless we have the rod we may tremble, fearing that we are not the children of God. God is no foolish fatherif He adopts a child, He adopts it that He may be a kind and wise father. And though He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men for nothingthough when His strokes are felt, His strokes are fewer then our crimes and lighter than our guiltyet at the same time He never spares the rod. He knows He would ruin His children if He did and therefore He lays it on with no very sparing hand and makes them cry out and groan while they think that He is turned to be their enemy.   
But as the Confession beautifully has it, exactly in keeping with Scripture, Though chastened by God as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises, as heirs of salvation. It is one great doctrine of Scripture that God cannot, as well as will not, cast off His children. I have often wondered how any persons can see any consistency in Scripture phraseology when they talk about Gods people being children of God one day and children of Satan the next. Now, it would startle me not a little if I should step into a lecture room and hear the lecturer asserting that my children might be my children today and his children the next. I should look at him and say, I dont see that. If they are really mine they are mine. If they are not mine they are not mine, but I do not see how they can be mine today and yours tomorrow.   
The fact is that those who preach thus do believe in salvation by worksthough they mask and cover it with specious qualifications as much as they may. There is as much need for a Luther to come out against them as there was for him to come out against the Romanists. Ah, Beloved, it is well to know that our standing is not of that character, but if we are children of God nothing can unchild usthough we be beaten and afflicted as children we never shall be punished by being cast out of the family and ceasing to be children. God knows how to keep His own children from sin. He will never give them liberty to do as they please. He will say to them, I will not kill youthat were an act I could not dobut this rod shall smite you. And you shall be made to groan and cry under the rodso that you will hate sin and you will cleave to Him and walk in holiness even to the end.   
It is not a licentious doctrine because there is the rod. If there were no rod of chastisement, then it were a daring thing to say that Gods children shall go unpunished. They shall, so far as legal penalty is concerned. No judge shall condemn them. But as far as paternal chastisement is concerned they shall not escape. I have loved you above all the nations of the earth, says God, and therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.   
Lastly, as sure as we are the children of God by adoption we must inherit the promise that pertains to it. If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.   
III. And now the final pointTHERE ARE SOME DUTIES WHICH ARE CONNECTED WITH ADOPTION.  
When the believer is adopted into the Lords family there are many relationships which are broken offthe relationship with old Adam and the Law ceases at once. But then he is under a new Law, the Law of grace under new rules and under a new Covenant. And now I beg to admonish you of duties, children of God. Because you are Gods children it has then become your duty to obey God. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with. You are a child. But inasmuch as you are a child you are bound to obey your Fathers faintest wishthe least intimation of His will.

What does He say to you? Does He bid you fulfill such-and-such an ordinance? It is at your peril if you neglect it. Then you are disobeying your Father who tells you to do so. Does He command you to seek the image of Jesus? Seek it. Does He tell you, Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect? Then not because the Law says so, but because your Father says so, seek after it. Seek to be perfect in love and in holiness. Does He tell you to love one another? Love one another. Not because the Law says, Love your God, but because Christ says, If you love Me keep My commandments. And this is the commandment that I give unto you, that you love one another.   
Are you told to distribute to the poor and minister unto the necessity of saints? Do it not because you think you are bound by the Law to do it, but do it because Christ says sobecause He is your Elder Brother, He is the Master of the household and you think yourself most sweetly bound to obey. Does it say, Love God with all your heart? Look at the commandment and say, Ah, commandment, I will seek to fulfill you. Christ has fulfilled you alreadyI have no need, therefore, to fulfill you for my salvation, but I will strive to do it because He is my Father now and He has a new claim upon me.   
Does He say, Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy? I shall remember what Jesus said The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and therefore I shall not be the Sabbaths slave. But as inasmuch as my Father rested on the seventh day, so also will I from all my works and I will have no works of legality to defile His Rest. I will do as many acts of mercy as ever I can. I will seek and strive to serve Him with filial homage. Because my Father rested so will I in the finished work of Christ.   
And so with each of the Ten Commandments. Take them out of the Law, put them in the Gospel and then obey them. Do not obey them simply as being the Law graven on tables of stoneobey them as Gospel written on fleshy tables of the heartfor you are not under the Law, but under grace.   
There is another duty, Believer. It is thisif God is your Father and you are His son you are bound to trust Him. Oh, if He were only your Master and you ever so poor a servant you would be bound to trust Him. But when you know that He is your Father, will you ever doubt Him? I may doubt any man in this world. But I do not doubt my father. If he says a thing, if he promises a thingI know if it is in his power he will do it. And if he states a fact to me, I cannot doubt his word. And yet, O child of God, how often do you mistrust your heavenly Father? Do so no more. Let Him be true. Let every man be a liarstill doubt not your Father. What? Could He tell you an untruth? Would He cheat you?   
No, your Father, when He speaks, means what He says. Can you not trust His love? What? Will He let you sink while He is able to keep you afloat? Will He let you starve while His granaries are full? Will He let you die of thirst when His presses burst with new wine? Are the cattle upon a thousand hills His and will He let you lack a meal? Is the earth the Lords and the fullness thereof and will He let you go away empty and poor and miserable? Oh, surely not! Is all grace His and will He keep it back from you? No, He says to us today, Son, you are ever with Me and all that I have is yours. Take what you will, it is all your own. But trust to your Father

*Leave to His sovereign will, To choose and to command. With wonder filled, you then shall own,   
How wise, how strong His hand.*

Now go away, Heirs of Heaven, with light feet and with joy in your countenances. You know that you are His children and that He loves you and will not cast you away. Believe that to His bosom He now presses youthat His heart is full of love to you. Believe that He will provide for you, protect you, sustain you and that He will at last bring you to a glad inheritance when you shall have perfected the years of your pilgrimage and shall be ripe for bliss. As He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

I need not this morning delay you any longer in personally addressing unconverted persons. Their welfare I always seek. I have sought, while speaking to the saints this morning, so to speak that every sinner may learn at least this one factsalvation is of God aloneand that he may be brought into this state of mindto feel that if he is savedGod must save him, or else he cannot be saved at all. If any of you acknowledge that Truth, then in Gods name I now bid you believe in Jesus. For as surely as ever you can feel that God has a right to save or to destroy you, grace must have made you feel that and therefore you have a right now to come and believe in Jesus. If you know that, you know all that will make you feel empty and therefore you have enough to make you cast your entire hope upon that fullness which is in Jesus Christ.

The Lord bless you and save you! Amen.  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1731 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ACCEPTED OF THE GREAT FATHER   
NO. 1731

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 15, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He has made us accepted in the Beloved.   
Ephesians 1:6.

A FEW Sabbath mornings ago I spoke to you upon those memorable words of the great Father, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased [The Voice from the Cloud and the Voice of the BelovedSermon #1727.] We now go a step farther and see how the love of God to His beloved Son overflows and runs like a river of life to all those who are in Christ Jesus. To Jesus He says, This is My beloved Son, and then He turns to all who are in union with Him and says, These, also, are My beloved for His sake. As Believers we are assured by the text that we are accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of Gods Grace! Why is that peculiar title used here? It might have been said we are accepted in Christ, or accepted in the Mediator! There must be some motive for giving Him this special name in this place.

The motive is declared to be that we may praise the glory of Divine Grace. God did not need a beloved when He made us His belovedHis heart was not pining for an objectHis affections were not lonely and desolate. His only-begotten Son was His delight and there was room enough in Him for all the Fathers love! It was we that needed to be loved and so the Beloved is mentioned that we may remember the unselfishness of Divine Grace. He makes us His beloved, but He already had a Beloved. We are also reminded that we are accepted in the Beloved to let us know that God has not shifted His loveHis first Beloved is still His Beloved. We have not supplanted His dear Son, nor even diverted a beam of love from Him.

The Lord has called us beloved who were not so and made us a people who were not a people. But He has not withdrawn a grain of love from Jesus, whom He still calls, My Elect, in whom My soul delights. All the infinite love of God still flows to Jesus and then to us in Him. It pleased the Father that to Him a fullness of love should be given, that out of it we might each one receive. Gods love to us is His love to His Son flowing in a hundred channels. For His sake He makes the wedding feast and we are the happy guests who sit at the table. Not for our sakes is this done, but for Jesus sake, that so it might be all of Grace. His perpetual acceptance with God is our acceptancethat nothing legal, nothing of which we might boastmight be mingled with the work of Sovereign Grace. We are accepted in the Beloved.   
Do you not love that sweet title? Is it not the highest quality of the acceptance, that it comes through such an One? He is beloved in the highest conceivable degree by the Father and in this you imitate the great God, for to you, also, the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. He is your Beloved as well as Gods Belovedand this is one proof that you are acceptedfor all who truly love the Son are approved by the Father. Thus says the Scripture Because he has set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he has known My name.

Is Christ your Beloved? Then, as He is the Fathers Beloved, you and the Father have evidently come to a sweet agreement! You have come to look at things from the same standpoint as the glorious Jehovah. The Lord and you evidently have a mutual interest in one common Person the Incarnate God. Your recognition of Christ as your Beloved is thus a sure proof that you are accepted in the Beloved! Do you see this? It is because He is the Fathers Beloved that the Father loves you in Him. And because He is your Beloved, therefore you have an evidence within yourself that you have come to an agreement with the Father and so to an acceptance by Him!

I delight in being accepted all the more because therein I am still further linked with Him who joins God and man in one grand affection! Gods love of His dear Son covers all Believers, as a canopy covers all who come beneath it. As a hen covers her chickens with her wings, so Gods love to Christ covers all the children of promise. As the sun shining forth from the gates of the morning gilds all the earth with golden splendor, so this great love of God to the Well-Beloved, streaming forth to Him, enlightens all who are in Him! God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in Him He is altogether well pleased with us. Oh, the joy of this blending of our interests with those of the Well-Beloved! I scarcely know where I am borne, even by a single word of my text.

Let this stand for our preface and now let us come close to our subject, upon which I do not desire so much to preach as to lead you individually to meditate and personally to feed. I would much rather put the text into your mouths as a sweet fruit from the garden of the Lord, most mellow and ripe, than be judged, myself, to handle it well. I seek not to exhibit my own skill in words, but I long that you may be refreshed with the marrow and fatness of this choice Word of God! I desire that you may, this morning, experimentally enjoy the precious drop of honey from the Rock, Christ Jesus, which is contained in the four wordsAccepted in the Beloved. Oh that the Holy Spirit may make you enter into the treasures which they contain!

I. I will begin by treating the text by way of CONTRAST. Brothers and Sisters, the Grace of God has made us to be, this day, accepted in the Beloved. But it was not always so. As many of us as have, through Grace, believed in Christ, we are, now, to a certainty, at this very moment, accepted in the Beloved. But in times past it was very different. It is not a matter of question, nor of imagination, nor of sentiment, but a matter of fact, declared by the Holy Spirit, Himself, that the Lord has made us accepted in the Beloved. But it was far otherwise a little while ago. What a contrast is our present condition of acceptance to our position under the Law through Adams fall!

By actual sin we made ourselves to be the very reverse of accepted, for we were utterly refused. It might have been said of us, Reprobate silver shall men call them, because God has rejected them. Our way was contrary to Gods way! Our thoughts were not His thoughts, our hearts were not according to His heart. Oh, if He had dealt with us, then, according to our sinswhat would have become of us? At that time we were condemned, condemned already, because we had not believed on the Son of God! We had no acceptableness before God. He could take no complacency in us. His pure and holy eyes could not look upon uswe were full of everything that provoked Him to jealousy!

But now we areoh, let me pronounce it like music!accepted in the Beloved. The criminal is now a child! The enemy is now a friend! The condemned one is now justified! Mark, it is not said that we are acceptable, though that were a very great thing, but we are actually accepted it has become not a thing possible that God might accept us, but He has accepted us in Christ! Lay this to your soul and may it fill you with delight! The Lord has chosen youHe has received you to Himself and set His love upon youand His delight is now in you! What a contrast from what you were a season ago in your own consciousnessin your own judgment.

Refresh your memories a little. If you passed through the same state of mind as I did, you loathed your very selves in the sight of God. You felt that God must abhor you, for you abhorred yourselves! You saw sin to be exceedingly sinful and that sinful thing was permeating your entire being, saturating your thoughts, putrefying your aims, making you to be corrupt and offensive in the sight of the Most High! I know I felt that if the Lord swept me away with the broom of destruction and cast me into the lowest Hell, I well deserved it.

But now that condemnation is no more to be dreaded! We receive not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption! Lift up your eyes out of the thick darkness and behold the Light of God! You who, in your own judgment, were cast away forever! You who thought that the Lord would never be favorable to you, nor blot out your sins, are this day accepted accepted in the Beloved! No contrast could be more sharp and clear and no reflections could be more joyful than this contrast suggests to the heart. Think, again, of the contrast between what you are now and what you would have been had not Grace stepped in. Left out of Christ as we then were, we might, at this time, have been going from sin to sin, reveling and rioting in it, as so many do. We might at this moment have been sinning with a high hand, finding even in the Lords Day a special opportunity for double transgression!

In our daring rebellion we might have been crying, The better the day, the better the deed, and so might have shown how completely we had thrown off the yoke of allegiance to the great King. Yes, by this we might have been dead as the result of our own sins. The measure of our iniquity might have been full and we might have been in Hell! Be startled, my Soul, at this thoughtthat nothing but infinite long-suffering has kept you out of the Pit that is bottomless, where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched. But, Brothers and Sisters, we are not in Hell and, what is more, we never shall be, for those iron gates can never close upon a soul that is accepted in the Beloved! And that is our condition now. We have fled for refuge to the hope set before us and now no more need we be in terror of the Great White Throne and the righteous Judge, and the stern sentence, Depart, you cursed. Clinging to the Cross and beholding ourselves covered with the righteousness of Christ, we know that we are saved and, what is more, we are accepted!

This blessed fact is true of those who might have been among the damned! Our laments might have been going up today amidst the wailings of the wretched who are eternally cast away from hope! But now, instead thereof, we lift the joyful song of praise unto our God and bless and magnify His name in whom this day we are accepted! Oh, my Soul, sing your own song to your BelovedJust as You arehow wondrous fair, Lord Jesus, are all Your members! A life Divine to them is givena long inheritance in Heaven

*Just as I was I came to You,   
An heir of wrath and misery!   
Just as You are before the Throne,   
I stand in righteousness Your own.   
Just as You arenor doubt, nor fear,   
Can with Your spotlessness appear;   
Oh timeless love! As You, Im seen,   
The righteousness of God in Him.*

One more point I cannot quite pass over, and that is the contrast between what we now are and all we ever could have been in the most favorable circumstances apart from the Beloved. If it had been possible for us, out of Christ, to have had desires after righteousness, yet those desires would all have run in a wrong direction! We wd have had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and so, going about to establish our own righteousness, we would not have submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God. We would have been weaving a righteousness of our own with heavy laborwhich would have proved no better, when completed, than a cobweb that could never conceal our nakedness!

At this moment the prayers we offered would never have been received at the Throne of God. The praises we presented would have been unsavory unto God. All that we could have aimed to accomplish in the matter of good works, had we striven to our utmost, would have been done in willfulness and prideand so must necessarily have fallen short of acceptance. We should have heard the voice of the Eternal saying, Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me!for out of Christ our righteousness is as unacceptable as our unrighteousnessand all our attempts to merit acceptance increase our unworthiness.

Oh, strive as you will, you self-righteous! Labor as you may after a righteousness of your ownwhat can come of it but confusion? Why is it that the people labor as in the very fire? This shall they have at the Lords handsthey shall lie down in sorrow! The bed is shorter than a man may stretch himself on it and the covering is narrower than what a man may wrap himself in it! Woe unto the man who is out of Christ, wherever he may be! In any case, the wrath of God abides on him.

But we are not out of Christ, we are not striving in vain, we are not spending our strength for nothing, for here is the blessed contrastwe are accepted in the Beloved! A touch of the black pencil brings out the bright lights and, therefore, I have laid on these shades. Such were some of you, but now you are washed; now you are sanctified; now you are justified; now you are accepted in the Beloved. All glory be unto the Grace by which we have received this heavenly benefit!

II. Secondly, we will say a little by way of EXPLANATION, that the text may sink yet deeper into your hearts and afford you richer enjoyment. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that once we were pitied of God as poor, lost, self-destroyed creatures that were, in a degree, hopeful. We were chosen of God while in that pitiable condition and, although forlorn, wretched and ruined, yet were we marked by His electing lovethis was still more encouraging. Then came a time of dealing with us and we were pardonedour transgressions were put awaywe were renewed in the spirit of our minds by the Holy Spirit! The righteousness of Christ was imputed to us and, at length, burst forth the light of this Word of God, He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Much went before this, but, oh, what a morning without clouds rose upon us when we knew our acceptance and were assured of it! Acceptance was the watchword and had troops of angels met us, we should have rejoiced that we were as blest as they! Understand that this acceptance comes to us entirely as a work of GodHe has made us accepted in the Beloved. We never made ourselves acceptable, nor could we have done so! He that first made us in creation, has now made us new, by His Grace, and so has made us accepted in the Beloved. That this was an act of pure Grace there can be no doubt, for the verse runs thus, Wherein He has made us accepted in the Belovedthat is, made us by His Grace.

There was no reason in ourselves why we should have been put into Christ and so accepted. The reason lay in the heart of the Eternal Father, Himself. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercyand by this will we were saved. To the great First Cause we must always trace the motive for our acceptance. Grace reigns supreme! It is a gracious acceptance of those who but for Grace had been rejected. Notice this and dwell upon the Truth of God, glorifying God therein.

Again, our acceptance is in the Beloved. It is only as we are in Christ that we are accepted. Let no man steal out of Christ and then say, God has accepted me. Nothing of the kind! If the Lord views you apart from Christ, whoever you may be, you are a thing to be consumed and not to be accepted in the Beloved, that is, as it were, within the gates of a City of Refuge. You must abide within that wall of fire of which the Cross is the center, or else you are not accepted. You must remain within the arms of the Well-Beloved, living in the very heart of Christ, and then you shall know yourself to be accepted in the Beloved. For Christs sake and because you are a part of Him, you shall be approved of the Father. He has taken you into Covenant union so that you can say with the favored Apostle, Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore the Father accepts you because He cannot dissociate you from His Son, nor His Son from you, nor think of Christ without you, nor of you without Christ! Therefore it is, you are, accepted in the Beloved.

That explains the words. The following remarks may make the sense somewhat more transparent. No man, my Brothers and Sisters, can be accepted of God while he is guilty of sin, so that our acceptance in the Beloved involves the fact that our sin, at this moment, is forever put away. Our unrighteousness is covered and, therefore, we are free from condemnation and we are accepted! Realize this Truth of God! It does not require any oratory to set it forthit needs only that your faith should fully apprehend it. Realize that you are forgiven right now. With your eyes upon the wounds of Christ, say unto your soul by the Spirit, I am without spot or wrinkle in the sight of God, for Christ has washed me whiter than driven snow. He has said of His people, You are clean every whit. Rejoice in this! You could not be accepted if He had not made you clean, for the filthy are not accepted of the Lord.

Neither could God accept a man devoid of righteousness. A mere colorless person, whose sin was forgiven, but who had no righteousness, could not be acceptable with Him. I cannot suppose the existence of such a being! But if there were such, he would be like one who was neither cold nor hot and must be vomited out of Gods mouth! He that is accepted with God must be positively righteous! Very well, then, if He has made Believers accepted in the Beloved, they that believe in Christ are righteous in the sight of God! Mark you, they are NOT righteous with a sham righteousness, an imaginary, fictitious righteousness! No, the righteousness which is of faith is the most real righteousness under Heaven! The righteousness of works may be questioned, but the righteousness of faith cannot be, for it is the righteousness of God Himself! Now drink that in. Do not let me hold it up and show you what a draught it is, but drink it up for yourselves! You are righteous in Christ, or else you could not be accepted! Sin is gone and righteousness is positively yours.

Now to come back again. If we are, indeed, accepted in the Beloved, does it not show how close, how real our union with the Beloved must be? Do we even share in Christs acceptance with God? Then we are one with Him in everything! Here is a father who has no particular interest in suchand-such a woman, but his son takes to himself that woman to be his wife. And now the loving father says, That woman is my daughter, and so she is received into his love for his sons sake. He says to her, You are my dear sons wife; therefore you are my daughter and dear to me. You are welcome in my house at any time.

Thus it is with the great God. He says to us, whom Christ has espoused unto Himself, that we may be His bride in blessed conjugal union forever and ever! Come to My heart, My children, for He is My Son and I love you for His sake; I accept you in Him. Is not that a wonderful unioncloser than the marriage bondwhich causes us to share in Christs righteousness so that the holy God can say to us who are sinful by nature, You are acceptable to Me because of your connection with My Son? If a woman of base character were married to the best of men, it would not make her acceptable. A father scarcely know what to do with such a daughter-in-law! We would try and carry out our relationship, as far as we could, with all kindness, but we could hardly say that such a person brought into our family by marriage would be acceptable to us!

But, oh, the Lord sees His people so wrapped up in Christ that He must accept them in Him! If I accept a man, I cannot quarrel with his little finger. If I accept a man, I accept his whole body and so, since the Father accepts Christ, He accepts every member of His mystical body! If I am one with Christ, though I am but, as it were, only the sole of His foot, and exposed often to the mire of the streets, yet, because the glorious Head is accepted, the meanest member joined in living union to that Head is accepted, too! Is not this glorious? Can you get a firm hold of it? Unless you intelligently grasp its full significance, you will not heartily enjoy this unspeakable privilege! But if your faith receives and welcomes it, you will not need any further explanation.

You are accepted in the Beloved and it is clear that there is a blessed union between you and Christ. The acceptance which the Father gives to Christ, He gives to you. Now, see if you can measure it. How acceptable is Christ to God? Must it not be an infinite acceptance? For it is an infinite Being infinitely accepting an infinitely holy and well-pleasing Oneand then accepting us who are in Him with the same acceptance! Oh, how acceptable is every Believer to the eternal Father in Christ Jesus!

III. Can we go a step farther? Will the Holy Spirit help us while I say a few words by way of ENLARGEMENT? If we are accepted in the Beloved, then, first, our persons are acceptedwe ourselves are well-pleasing to Him. God now looks upon us with pleasure. Once He said of men that it repented Him that He had made them, but now when He looks at His people, He never repents that He made us. He is glad He made us! He takes delight in us! Look at your own children. Sometimes they grieve you, but still you are pleased with them. It is a pleasure to have them near you and if they are out of your sight very long, you grow anxious about them.

They are soon coming home for their holidaysthey are glad to return home and I am sure their mothers are glad at the thought of seeing them again. Our Father is as truly pleased with usour very persons are accepted of God. He delights in us individually! He thinks of us with joy and when we are near Him, it gives pleasure to His great heart. Being ourselves accepted, the right of access to Him is given us. When a person is accepted with God, he may come to God when he chooses. He is one of those sheep who may go in and out and find pasture. He is one of those courtiers who may come, even, to the royal Throne and meet with no rebuff. No chamber of our great Fathers house is closed against us!

No blessing of the Covenant is withheld from us! No sweet smile of the Fathers face is refused us. He that accepted us gives us access into all blessings. See, I have accepted you concerning this thing, also. You remember the story of King Ahasuerus and his poor trembling spouse, Estherhow she ventured in at peril of her lifefor if her royal lord and master did not stretch out the golden scepter, the guards that stood about the throne would cut her down? The queen, royal though she was, dared to come unbidden into the despots presence. But today, when you and I come to God, we have no fear of that kind because we are already acceptedHe has already stretched out to us the golden scepter and He bids us come boldly.

All is well between us and Him. We have access with boldness into this Grace in which we stand. And, being accepted, ourselves, our prayers are also accepted. Children of God, can you sincerely believe this? Do you not sometimes pray as if you were beggars in the street, pleading with unwilling persons to give you a gratuity of coppers? I believe many children of God do so, but when we know we are accepted in the Beloved, we speak to God with a sweet confidenceexpecting Him to answer us! To us it is no surprise that our heavenly Father should hear our prayers. He does it so often and so generously that we expect Him to do so always! It is a way of His to hear the prayers of the Well-Beloved. When unaccepted men pray, they pray unaccepted prayers. But when accepted men plead with God, He says, In an acceptable day have I heard you, and in a day of salvation have I succored you.

When God delights in men, He gives them the desires of their hearts. Oh, the splendor of that mans position who is accepted in the Beloved! To him the Lord seems to say, Ask what you will and it shall be given you, not only to the half of My kingdom, but My kingdom, itself, shall be yoursyou shall sit with Me upon My throne. Oh, the blessedness of being accepted in the Beloved because the acceptance makes our prayers to be as sweet incense before the Lord! It follows, then, as a pleasant sequence, that our gifts are accepted, for those who are accepted with God find a great delight in giving of their substance to the glory of His name.

I know that when money is needed for the Church of God and one of the Brothers goes round to collect the offerings, the subjects of the kingdom are apt to say, Here comes the tax-gatherer again. Yes, that is what the subjects say. Oh, but when the children are about, they cry, Here is another opportunity of presenting an offering to our Father, a welcome occasion of proving that our love to Him is pure, without greed or grudging. They clap their hands to think that they may come before the Lord with their sacrifices! Their only question is, Will He accept it? Oh, what would I not give if I did but know that He would accept it? Many a poor woman will take her two mites and not more stealthily than joyfully cast them into the treasury, as she says, Will He really accept them when dropped into the offering box? Will He even know about them?

And some of Gods children get schemes into their heads of doing great things for God, but they say, May I not, after all, be working for myself? May it not be that pride and vain-glory so leaven my labors that the odor of a sweet smell, like to that acceptable sacrifice which the Philippians presented, will be all a-wanting. No, my Friends, my helpers in every good workyou need not ask that question if He has accepted youfor the accepted man brings an accepted offering! It is wonderful how God sees good things in His people where we cannot see them. He saw in Abijah some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel when, perhaps, no one else saw it.

Mistress Sarah once made a rather naughty speech, yet there was one good word in it. I doubt very much if any one of us would have been quick enough to discern it. Yet the Holy Spirit picked out that one word and put it into the Old Testament to her praise! She spoke unbelievingly as to her bearing a child at her advanced age, thought the promise was announced that she should bring forth a son. She said, Shall it be, I being old, my lord being old, also? This was a bad speech, but we are somewhat startled to read in the New Testament, As Sarah also obeyed her husband, calling him lord. If God can find a speck of good in us, He will! Then let us try what we can do for Him. Here is a great lump of quartz, but if the Lord can see a grain of gold, He will save the quartz for the sake of it. He says, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.

I do not mean that the Lord deals thus with all men. It is only for accepted men that He has this kind way of accepting their gifts. Had you seen me, when a young man, and an usher walking through the streets with rolls of drawings from a boys school, you would have guessed that I considered them of no value and fit only to be consigned to the fire. But I always took a great interest in the drawings of my own boy and I still think them rather remarkable. You smile, I dare say, but I do so think and my judgment is as good as yours! I value them because they are his and I think I see budding genius in every touch! But you do not see it because you are so blind! I see it since love has opened my eyes!

God can see in His peoples gifts to Him and their works for Him a beauty which no eyes but His can perceive. Oh, if He so treats our poor service, what ought we not do for Him? What zeal, what cheerfulness should stimulate us! If we are accepted, our sacrifices shall be acceptable! The Almighty will permit us to be called His servants and we shall find His blessing resting on all that we do. If the tree is good, the fruit is good. As is the man so is his strengthand as is his prestige, so is his power. Accepted in the Beloved has for its accompaniment, God has accepted your works.

IV. We have thus pursued our train of thought in a contrast, an explanation and an enlargement. Let us now indulge in a few Accepted in the Beloveds. May not each Believer talk thus with himselfI have my sorrows and grief. I have my aches and pains and weaknesses, but I must not repine, for God accepts me. Ah me! How one can laugh at griefs when this sweet word comes in, accepted in the Beloved! I may be blind, but I am accepted in the Beloved! I may be lame, I may be poor, I may be despised, I may be persecuted, I may have much to put up with in many ways, but really, these troubles of the flesh count for little or nothing to me since I am, accepted in the Beloved!

I have to mourn over a multitude of infirmities and imperfections and there is never a day but I have repenting work to do and feel compelled to fly to the precious blood, again, for a renewed sense of pardon. Yes, but I am accepted in the Beloved! I have been struggling with this evil and that, and I hope I have got the victory, though I have had many a wound in the battleyes, but I am, accepted in the Beloved. I have just now been blaming myself for my shortcomings and mourning over my many slips and failuresyes, but I am, accepted in the Beloved! I am speaking for you, or at least I am trying to interpret your meditationsI want you to let this blessed fact go down sweetly with youthat whatever may be the trials of life, whatever the burdens that oppress you, whatever the difficulties of the way, whatever the infirmities of the body, whatever the frailties of the mind, still, as being, in the Beloved, you are accepted!

Oh, will you not be accepted when you stand where golden harps ring out perpetual hallelujahs? Where every robe is spotless, and every heart is sinless? Yes, but you will not be a jot more accepted, then, than you are now! In all this noise, strife and turmoil of everyday life, you are, accepted in the Beloved! Is not this present Grace in the highest perfection? What more can you have till you behold the unveiled face of infinite Love! Drink down that Truth of God, I pray you! Let a further reflection be added to the sweetness of your enjoyment. Think of who it is that accepts you. It is no common person who admits us to his favorit is God, whose name is Jehovah, The Jealous God. Holy, holy, Holy, cry the seraphim unceasinglyand nothing that is defiled can ever enter His palace gates, nor can His heart endure the thought of iniquityand yet it is He that has accepted you!

Did your Brethren cast you out? Did your friend condemn you? Did your own heart accuse you? Did the devil roar against you? What does it matter, for He has accepted you! Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? He has made us accepted in the Beloved! And if that is so, we need not fear what men can do to us. Now, just think againHe has made you accepted it the Beloved. He that is God has accepted you in Christ! Would you have liked any other way of acceptance one half as well? For my part, I had infinitely rather receive everything through Christ than from myself. Mercy smells so much sweeter and better from the fact that it all comes from the dear, pierced hands of my Master!

If I were, this day, accepted in myself, I should fear that I might lose my acceptance, for I am a poor, changeable being! But if I am accepted in the Beloved, then the Beloved will never change and I always must and shall be accepted, come what may! Is not this a word to die with? We will meet death and face his open jaws with this word, Accepted in the Beloved. Will not this be a word to rise with amidst the blaze of the great Judgment Day? You wake up from your tomb, lift up your eyes, and as you gaze upon the terrors of that tremendous hour, you say, I am accepted in the Belovedwhat can fill you with alarm? Forever and ever, as the cycles of eternity revolve, will not this be the core and center of Heavens most supreme bliss that we are still accepted in the Beloved?

I hear strange theories, nowadays, of what may happen to the saints they tell us sinners will die out, or be restored, or something elsefor they are not content with the Scriptures teaching of eternitythey must invent strange notions about the punishment of the ungodly! Then they begin to picture new destiny for saints, too, and the Heaven of our fathers has sad doubts cast on it. I care not for their dreams, for I am accepted in the Beloved! It matters nothing what all the eternities can revealhe that is accepted in Christ and eternally one with Himhas nothing before him at which he need tremble!

My time is goneI heard the warning bell just nowand so I must forbear to amplify on the many reflections that spontaneously flow out of our textall fitted to stifle anxious care, to sweeten mortal life and to set our souls longing for the Home which is above where so hearty a welcome awaits us!

V. So now I wish to finish with this one PRACTICAL USE. If it is so that we are accepted in the Beloved, then let us go forth and tell poor sinners how they can be accepted, too. Are you, today, though unconverted, anxious to be found right at last? Listen, Friend! If you want to be accepted, you must accept! And what, do you ask, must I accept? You must accept Christ as the free gift of God. You must accept Christ as Gods way of accepting you, for if you get into Christ you are accepted. The guiltiest of the guilty may be accepted in Christ no matter how great and grievous their transgressions may have beenthe atoning Sacrifice can take all their guilt awayand the perfect Righteousness can justify the most heinous sinner before God. You may be accepted!

Listen! If you come to Christ, now, and trust Him, you will be accepted. Never did one come to Christ to be rejectedyou shall not be the first. Try it! And though you came into this house condemned, you shall go out accepted if you come, now, and hide in those dear wounds of His as doves hide in the clefts of the rocks! Listen again. It is not only that you may be acceptedit is rather that you will be accepted! You cannot but be accepted in Christ! There is no sort of fear nor possibility that you shall come to Christ and be cast out! Christ must change. The Truth of God must change. God must change towards His Well-BelovedHe must cease to love Him before He could refrain from loving a soul that is in Him!

Guilty as you are, come to Christ this morning! Come! Despise not the exhortation, for you will be acceptedit cannot but be that you will be accepted if you come! And you shall be accepted at once. If at this moment you are as vile as vile can be, if, while I speak, you know that you are black as Hells dark night, yet the moment that you come to Christ you are accepted in the Beloved! Trust Him! Trust Him! Have you done so? Your sin is gone! Righteousness is imputed! You are saved!

And, then, to close, if you get into Christ you shall be accepted us long as you are in Christ and as the Grace of God will never let you go out of Christ, you shall be accepted foreveraccepted in the Beloved world without end! If that is the verdict of this day, it shall be the verdict of every day till days shall be no more! The hope for you dying; the song for your rising again; the verdict which shall be given out when the great assize shall sit and you shall be tried for your life for the last time! They that sit in judgment shall say, Let that man go! He is accepted in the Beloved. If you believe in Jesus, it shall be so! It IS so! It shall be so forever and ever! God bless you all by His good Spirit, for Christs sake. Amen.

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THE GLORY OF GRACE   
NO. 2763

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JANUARY 26, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, DURING THE WINTER OF 1869.

The glory of His Grace.   
Ephesians 1:6.

GOD is essentially glorious. Even were there no eyes to behold Him, no lips to hymn His praise, no intelligent creatures to obey Him, He would be infinitely glorious in Himself. Yet, nevertheless, God chooses to exhibit His Glory that He may get praise out of the hearts of intelligent beings, who, beholding the varied and wonderful manifestations of the exceeding riches of His Grace, may be compelled with joy and gratitude, to glorify Him. In this sense, also, God is gloriousthat is, Glory is given unto HimHe is admired, He is beloved, He is adored. Every attribute of God has its Glory, not only essential, but Glory through its exhibition of Himself. Gods power is glorious, as we all know, in the works of His hands. His skill, His wisdom, His benevolenceall these are to be seen in those works of Nature, as we call them, which meet our eyes every day. Gods justice is glorious and we sometimes tremble to think how awfully glorious it is in the lowest pit of Hell. We have, on the present occasion, however, not to talk about other attributes of God, but about this one the glory of His Graceand while we are doing so, I must remark that we shall have to see, incidentally, how this Grace, in itself glorious, really brings Glory to all the other attributes. When God glorifies His Grace, He glorifies His whole CharacterGrace becomes a platform upon which all the perfections of Deity exhibit themselvesand Grace becomes a light which shines upon all the rest, and they, albeit bright enough in themselves, seem to be doubly bright when they glow in its brilliance.

Where every place is rich, one scarcely needs to strike out a pathway. Let me, however, ask you first to notice the Glory of Divine Grace as it has been displayed, and then, secondly, I will give you a few words on the qualities for which it is distinguished.

I. In the first place, then, let us meditate on THE GLORY OF DIVINE GRACE AS IT HAS BEEN DISPLAYED.   
Grace has been displayed, of old, in the great council chamber, where all the attributes of God sat in solemn conclave to devise a way by which God should be glorified. Foreknowledge, as one of the attributes of God, prophesied that man, if made fallible, would sadly fall. Justice, therefore, arose and thundered forth his word that if man fell and transgressed the Creators command, he must be punished. Grace, however, asked whether it could not be possible that man could be saved and yet Justice should be satisfied. Wisdom, infinite Wisdom, answered the question, and Gods own Son was the answer! He promised that in the fullness of time, He would become a Man for us and, for our redemption, bear the whole weight of Jehovahs justly merited wrath, that the vessels of mercy might be secured.   
Now, albeit that all the other attributes displayed themselves in the council chamber, when our soul, in holy reverence, dares venture into that once secret, but now revealed counsel of the Most High, we are compelled to admire all the attributes of God, but most of all, His Grace. Why, it seems to me that Grace presided at this congress! It was Grace that pressed mans suit, it was Grace that inspired Wisdom, it was Grace that invited Wisdom to be its counselor, it was Grace that defended man when Justice might have spoken against him. Grace was our advocate! Christ Jesus, who was Grace, itself, of old, as He is now, stood then as The Wonderful, The Counselor. And He devised the plan, pleaded our cause and promised to work it out. The Glory of Grace, as it sits with its crown upon its head in the council chamber of eternity, is a subject well worthy of your devout reflection and quiet meditation.   
But now the council is over, and Grace steps forth to be glorified in another manner. Now it glorifies itself in its gifts. Look how Grace gives man blessings, countless in number, and priceless in value, scattering them along his pathway as if they were but stones, while each is so precious that only Heaven itself can tell its worth! At last, after having given man blessings through long ages, Grace comes up to Calvary and there gives its lastno, its first, its all, its grandest gift! Grace gives up the Incarnate Son of God to die! He gives up His own life and bows His head upon the Cross. There may be much of shame and ignominy about the Crossassuredly there is, for there we see sin punishedbut how much there is of Glory and of majesty for there we see Grace triumphant over itselfGrace in the heart of Christ leading Him to save others while Himself He cannot save!   
We talk of these things, nowadays, as household words, but not thus do the angels speak concerning Grace glorified in the Person of the dying Son of God! Not thus did we think when, for the first time, we saw Him to be ours in the day of our sore trouble and sorrow! We shall not think so slightingly of Grace, as I fear we sometimes do now, when we shall see His face without a veil between and then shall know what wondrous Grace that was which made that glorious face become marred with sorrow, and bowed that glorious head Divine to the depths of the grave! Grace, in its highest Glory, is to be seen best on Calvary, but I think it is rather to be seen and felt than to be talked of. My feeble tongue declines to bear the burden of a theme so weighty. I cannot stretch the wings of my imagination and rise to the height of this grand argument! I cannot adequately utter the praises of that Grace which is to be seen in the dying Son of God on Calvary. Since then, Beloved, you have had to glorify Grace in its continued gifts. You have found that He, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, has with Him also freely given all things to us. What debtors you and I are! As Rutherford would have said, we are drowned debtorswe are head over heels in debtwe are sunken fathoms deep in an ocean of indebtedness to God!   
How much do you owe my Lord? Take your pen and sit down quickly, and reckon up the amount. Ah, you may sit down quickly, but you will not rise up quickly, for the full account you can never write. There are no scales in which to weigh those ponderous blessings! Earth has no coin by which to represent their value! Talk of millions and of billionswe must get into the inconceivable before we can estimate the infinite, the unutterable value of those gifts which Jesus Christ continually gives to us, which Grace pours into our lap from the cornucopia of love!  
Now we go a little further. We have had Gods Grace in the council chamber, we have had His Grace in its gifts and, in both these things we may well speak of the glory of His Grace. Now we will speak of Grace in its triumphs. It is a strange thing that love should be a warrior and that Grace should fight, but when Grace came to make us gracious, it found us graceless and averse to Grace. The door was shut when Jesus came, though His hand and heart were open. Jesus Himself burst open the door and stormed the passage into the heart of man. When mercy comes to bless, it finds us bent to curse. We will not receive the proffered gift we reject the mercyand Grace must overcome our will. It must lead us captives in silken bonds, or otherwise it cannot bless us! Man, while his will is free, is graceless. It is only when his will is bound by fetters of Sovereign Grace that he is gracious at all. If there is such a thing as free will, Luther truly hit the mark when he called free will a slave! It is only our will in bonds that is truly free. Our will constrained, ranges at liberty! When Grace binds it, then it is free, indeed, and only thenwhen the Son has made it free!   
Think, my Brothers and Sisters, of the battles which Grace has had with men, and what glory it has gained, for, remember, it has never once been defeated! When Grace has come into the heart, there may have been a long struggle, but it has always ended in a victory. In your case and mine, how stern has been the fight! Do you not remember well the day when Jesus met you by the way and He said to you, Soul, have you no interest in Me? Do you remember how you spat in His face and passed Him by, and made a jest of the Crucified? Do you remember another time when He sent His black messengers, sickness and sorrow, and you lay upon your bed and He came to you, again, and you uttered words to Him which looked like truth, but, alas, they were but lying, deceptive wordsand you turned your face to the wall and you vowed repentancebut you did not repent? You use no other friend so evilly as you have used Him.   
And do you recollect how you were determined to be losthow your soul set itself desperately on mischief? But you have not had your way. Grace has overcome you and here you sit, a captive   
*A willing captive to your Lord,   
To sing the triumphs of His Word.*   
Ah, this always delights me when I think about preaching the Gospel, that Grace must be a conqueror where God sends it forth! We may sing, in the language of one of those good Welsh hymns, which I think, when translated, runs something like this   
*Ride forth, O Jesus!   
Hell trembles at You,   
Earth cannot withstand You!   
Mans heart will break before You   
Go forth and win the day!*   
And when Jesus goes forth, He does win the day! The man may kick and struggle, but if his name is written in the Lambs Book of Life, he will be obliged to yield. If thus the heavenly mandate runs, Almighty Grace, arrest that man, that man, in Gods time, shall be arrested by the strong hand of Sovereign Grace and he, converted, changed and made a new man in Christ Jesus, shall be one of Graces willing captivesa trophy of its Omnipotence!  
And then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, as we speak of the triumphs of Divine Grace, we must not forget the multitudes of triumphs Grace has had in each soul. If you could bear in your body a mark for every triumph that Grace has had in you and if every mark were a jewel, would you not be covered from head to foot with jewels? And then it is not merely one man in whom Grace has worked, but think of the countless myriads of souls that Grace has overcome. It has gone into every land, into every sort of habitation and it has secured its trophies. Oh, what a glorious day will that day be when Christ, who is Grace Incarnate and embodied, shall enter into Heaven with all His blood-bought saints and shall cry, Here I am, Father, and the children whom You have given Me. Here are they whom I have rescued from the jaws of the lion and from the paws of the bear. Not one of them is missing! I have been triumphant over all their foes and I safely bring them to their promised rest. The glory of His Grace is seen, then, in its triumphs.   
But let me remark, further, that the glory of Divine Grace is to be seen more fully, by-and-by, when the whole plan of Grace shall be worked out. I take it that we have, none of us, a very clear idea of what the full design of Divine Grace is. We say it is the blessing of the electit is, moreover, the indirect blessing of the world through these elect onesor, as good Elisha Coles has said, and we endorse his saying, Grace gives some good things to all men, though it gives all good things to some men. But I take it that we have not, any of us, fully realized the design of Gods Grace. We all have some little confusion in our minds. That confusion may be, probably, a better insight of what God is doing than if we were able to put it into an orderly system. I doubt not that, in the millennial days which are yet to come, we shall see that Gods Grace will be so wonderfully magnified at the winding up that our little hearts have never thought of how grandly the scene shall end!

At present, I see the world continually go on in its wickedness. It seems to me that Justice is rather magnified than Grace, for multitudes are daily descending into Hell. But there are happier days to come and a brighter season, when Messiah the Prince shall stand a second time among the sons of men! Then shall the earth ring with His praise! Then shall myriads of men and women be made to know Him! Then shall they come and bow down before Him and all people shall call Him blessed! And then the enormous multitudes shall swell the roll of those chosen ones to such a marvelous degree that, at the winding up, it shall be fully known and seen that there is a number that no man can number whom Christ has redeemed out of all people, and kindreds, and tongues! And when the multitudes of infants and all the myriads of these elect ones who shall be brought in, shall be encompassed within the shining walls of Heaven, then shall we see that the number of the saved infinitely surpasses the number of the lost! Then shall we see that though the gate was narrow, though the road was strait, yet the number of those who pass along it shall be immeasurably greater than the number of those who shall go in the other road, broad as it is, and wide though its gates may be!   
I believe that the songs of Heaven shall prevail over all the growls of Hell. Satan shall not be triumphant. Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied! And Divine Grace, when it counts up its numbers, shall laugh in the face of Hell and cry, I am triumphant over you! The number of my trophies far exceeds the number of yours, for you, black tyrant, have done little in comparison with what I have accomplished! See, you have here and there a ruined soul, but I have multitudes of blood-bought ones, whom I have raised up to everlasting life and more than perfection, for it is the very perfection of Deity which I have given to them.   
II. Well now, having just run briefly over these thingsyou may think of them at your leisure more fullyI want to talk about the subject in another way for a little while. To the praise of the glory of His grace. I take it that we may see the Glory of this Grace if we notice THE QUALITIES FOR WHICH IT IS DISTINGUISHED.   
Grace is glorious if we consider its antiquity. Grace is not a piece of new cloth put into an old garment. Grace is not an alteration which God made in His original plan. It is not some addition that He made because some unlooked-for catastrophe occurred. He foresaw the Fall from all eternity and every iota of the plan of Grace was devised of old. Before yon sun was created, long before he had been swaddled in mists, before the stars had known their resting places and had sent the rays of their light through the thick darkness. Long before the mountains knew their places, or the water was poured into its fountains, God had chosen His people, had set His heart of love upon them, had devised His plan and chosen the objects that should be embraced by it. I love to think of Grace in its antiquity. There are certain people who have a reverence for everything that is oldthe Puseyite, for instancehe likes a thing because it used to be worn some six, seven, or 800 years ago!  
Now, I confess I have a reverence for that which is old, but then it must be old enough. If a doctrine or a ceremony is as old as the time of Christ, I am content. But as to doctrinal truth, I can always rejoice if I can see the fact to be old as the everlasting hills! The geologist tells us that some rocks must have been fused myriads of years agoand we tell him it may be so, but we are certain that the Covenant of Grace is older than the oldest of these things. They are but born yesterday infants, aged though they seem to be. But Grace has hoary age upon its head. Its head and its hair are white like wool, as white as snow! Venerable for age is the Grace of God and the plan of Grace is no new chapter of modern compilation, but it is old as Gods own eternityan everlasting thing! O Grace, you are from everlasting to everlasting!   
Then, again, the Glory of Grace consists not only in its antiquity, but in its Immutability. The Grace of God, old though it is, has never changed. Many a mighty river has been dried up and now, over its dry bed men can walk. The very sea has changed. There are no furrows on its brow, but it has forsaken its channels and now finds a resting place that is new to it. The very sun alters, everything grows dim with agebut Grace flows on as it did at first! Its stream is just as deep and its current just as mighty. There is no failing in Grace, any more than there is any failing in God. And I may remark that it has never failed of its objects. No, Grace runs in one direct stream and it has never been made to wind about. The chosen vessels of mercy have been washed in that streamit has not passed by a single one, nor has one more been washed by it than those chosen ones of old. Never, never can we permit the idea of the mutability of GraceGrace given today, and taken away tomorrow!   
I repeat what I have often said. If Grace could be given to a man temporarily, and then taken away from him, I cannot imagine a more awful malediction than that Grace would really be! I would sooner perish as that fallen angel, that great sinner, Satan, than as one whom God had loved, if He did not love me forever, because to give Grace, and then to take it away would be the most awful method of tantalizing that was ever known! Better for God to send no Gospel if He did not send an everlasting one! The Arminian scheme of salvation is worse than nothing! I had rather have no Revelation than believe it if, on that hypothesis, I am but tantalized and tempted to hope that I may be saved, but it ends in blackness and darkness forever because there is a condition annexed to it which I cannot fulfilland there is something demanded of me which I cannot give. The Grace of God, then, is greatly magnified in its Immutability as well as in its antiquity.   
And then, to turn to another view of it, Grace derives great Glory from its freeness. The Grace of God is as free as the air we breathe. If any man here asks whether he may believe in Christ, my answer to him ishe not only may, but he is commanded to do so! If, as I have often declared to you, it is the command of God that we believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent, you are guilty of sin every moment that you live without faith in Christ! It is commanded of you, therefore you can clearly say you have a right to it, for any man has a right to obey a Divine command! If we are commanded, we have a perfect right to come. He who commands us to come to the feast gives us, in that very command, the only permit we need. Oh, I would that men would believe in the freeness of Divine Grace!   
I preach the sovereignty of Divine Grace and desire to preach it with reverence before God and with faithfulness to manbut the freeness of Grace is not inconsistent with the Sovereignty of it. Albeit that none ever drink of that sacred Fountain but those whom God sweetly constrains to drinkif men do not drink, the fault lies with themand their blood will be on their own head forever. For thus cries the Gospel, Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely. The Grace of God is freeno preparation is needed before you can receive it, for God gives it even to men who do not ask for itI was found of them that sought not after Me. There is no preparation needed! I tell you, the preparation that you imagine is necessary would be just that which would disqualify you! Come to Jesus now! You are commanded to come just as you are. Oh, may Divine Grace, that gives the command, induce you to obeymay it sweetly constrain you to obey! Remember that there is no barrier between you and Christ except your own depraved heart. If once you have the will, if God gives you the will to go to Christ, there is nothing that can keep you back and nothing that should intimidate you from coming, for the cry is, Whoever will, let him come.   
This is, I think, one of the glories of Divine Graceits freeness. But it is a Glory which a great many cannot see. As soon as we touch upon it, some Brother says, Ah, he is not sound upon that point, though, when we preached upon Gods Sovereignty, he liked it well enough. With regard to the matter of soundness, I do not so much consider soundness as sense. I always think if a thing is in Scripture, it little matters to me if it is not in mens creed. They can alter their creed as quickly as they likeI shall not alter mine. I will just stand to what I always shall and always have preached, and take Gods Word as it stands, whether I can reconcile it with another part of Gods Word or not. One part of the Glory of Grace, then, consists in its freeness.   
And now let me notice another thing. The Glory of Free Grace will be found in its benevolence. What good has Grace done? I will put it in another shapeWhat hurt has Grace ever done? There is not a man in the universe who can blame Grace for any hurt he has received by it. You know that a great public good is often a private evil, but while Grace is often a public good, it is never a private evil. No one was ever injured by it. I love a Gospel that hurts nobody. If there are none saved by it, at least they cannot point the finger at the Gospel and say, That has destroyed me. Their destruction lies with themselves! Grace scatters mercies, but never anything that is the reverse of good. Its path is that of a conqueror, but its garments are not stained with blood, except its own blood. It is true that it marches over the world, beating down every high look and leveling every lofty thing. But, then, that is a blessing, for it is better to be leveled by Grace than to be exalted by pride! Good, only good are you, O Grace! You are a continually gushing fountain of mercy. Your stream is always crystal clear. There is no adulteration here, or anything that is ill to man, but, as Milton says, It is better still, and better still, and better still in infinite progression.

And now let me say, once more, what I think in my own soul will be one of the greatest glories of Divine Grace. I think it will be if ever I shall see the face of God with acceptance. I have said, and say it again *Then loudest of the crowd Ill sing,   
While Heavens resounding mansions ring With shouts of Sovereign Grace.*   
You remember the story of the three wonders in Heaven? The first wonder was that we should see so many there we did not expect to see. The second was that we should miss so many we did expect to see there. But the third wonder would be the greatest wonder of allto see ourselves there! Oh, when I hear people censuring and condemning their fellow Christians because they are not perfectbecause they see some little fault in themI think, Do these people know that they are saved by Grace and that they have nothing which they have not received? I think, surely, if they knew how they received what they have, they would not be quite so hard with those who have not the blessing. When we feel right, my Brothers and Sisters, we always feel ourselves to be veritable beggars. No, the more right we come to be, the less we feel ourselves to be! That big letter, I, is so large with us all, pride is so interwoven into our nature, that I am afraid we shall never get it pulled out until we are wrapped in our winding-sheets! But if there is anything that can cure it, I think it is the fact that it is all of Divine Grace. Heaven shall show us how gracious God has been to us, but on earth we shall never know the full value of the Grace we have received. Let us continually sing   
*Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,   
Daily Im constrained to be!*   
And, then, as a consequence, let us walk humbly with our God. Let us always be giving glory to Christ, waiting for and expecting that happy day when we shall glorify Him with all His saints, when He shall come in the Glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him!   
Brothers and Sisters, will we not sing if we once get across the Jordan? Oh, what leaps for joy! What shouts! What praise! What thanksgiving! Ah, my hoary-headed Brother, you are saying, Would to God I were safely there! And so you shall be before long. Ah, my dear young Friend, you are saying, Oh, what temptations I have to battle with! Would God that I were at rest! Your rest may be nearer than you think it iswe are, none of us, sure how near we are to Heaven. That trouble you are dreading may never come! That trial may never arrive, for Christ may come before the trial and we may be caught up to dwell with Christ before it shall come!   
Let us just speed up the day by an hour or two. Ah, I shall soon be dying. Time quickly fades away. Speed on, O Time! Roll on your wheels and every year fly on apace! The shorter the road, the sooner I shall be with Him! The nearer I am to Jordan, the nearer am I to Canaan! Farewell, manna of the wilderness! Farewell, fiery serpents and Amalekites! My soul shall soon cross the Jordan! I shall see the face of Him whom, though I have not yet seen, I do unceasingly adorein whom I have a Heaven on earth and with whom I shall have an everlasting blessedness in that day when He calls me Home to Himself!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EPHESIANS 4.**

Verse 1. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. You are called to be sons of God, you are called to be one with Christ, you are called to be kings and priests unto Godthis is the highest possible vocation that anyone can have, so walk worthy of it! O Beloved, if we walk worthy of this vocation, what holy and noble lives we shall lead! The Apostle so much desired godliness and holiness to be the characteristics of those to whom he wrote that he used a very strong term of entreatyI beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. You are not called to bully others, to be lords over Gods heritage. You are called to be Christ-like, to be gentle and tender, ready to bear and to forgive all manner of wrong that may be done to you.

3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Some people seem as if they endeavored to break the unity of the Spirit and to snap every sacred bond of love and Christian affectionbe you not like they, but let Christs mind be in you and with lowliness, and meekness, and long-suffering, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4-6. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. If there were two lords, you might be divided into two parties. If there were two faiths, you might split up into two sections. If there were two baptisms, you might be right in having two denominations. If there were two fathers, there might be two families. If there were two indwelling spirits, there would be, and there must be, two sorts of people! But, in the true Church of Jesus Christ, there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7. But unto everyone of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. We have not all the same form of Grace and we cannot all perform the same service for the Savior. We differ very much from each other as to our abilities and as to the positions which we can occupyand our Lord intended it to be so.

8-10. Therefore He says, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended, first, into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same, also, that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things). Paul could not help giving us this lesson by the way, that He that ascended was also He that first descended. And you may depend upon it that the man who will attain the highest honor in the Church of Christ is the man who descendswho lays aside all ambition and all desire to be honored and respectedand who is willing to be nothing. He who thus descends, shall surely ascend.

11. And He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. Not all alike, not all Apostles or Prophets. And not all equal, for pastors may not be equal in rank with Apostles. They are not all to do the same work, for all teachers cannot prophesy, neither does a Prophet always serve as a pastor and watch over a flock. Jesus Christ gave different gifts.

12, 13. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then, whatever spiritual gifts we have, they are not our own to use as we pleasethey are only entrusted to us that we may employ them to help our fellow Christians. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, we are one with Christ, and we are one with each other and, therefore, we must not look, every man upon his own things, but also upon the things of others! And it should be a question of the first importance to every Christian, How can I best utilize myself for the benefit of the rest of the members of the Church? Do not ask, How can I benefit myself? but let your enquiry be, How can I be most profitable to my fellow Christians?

I have heard some professors say of a sermon that they could not feed under itthe discourse was very likely to be useful to the unconverted, but they could not stand it because they could not feed under it. Their idea seems to be that preaching must always be a spoon used for feeding thembut it is not so! The Word of God contains much spiritual nutriment specially suitable for the lambs of the flock. These men who are strong, need meat, so they say that they do not enjoy what they hear, it is of no use to them. But are the babies in Christs family never to be fed? Does not humanity itself teach us that, first of all, the weakest and feeblest should be cared for? Oh, for Grace to be unselfish! There is such a thing as Christian selfishness and, of all evil things in the world, it is the most unchristian! When the first and last concern of a man is his own salvation, his own comfort, his own advancement, his own edification and nothing besides, he needs to be saved from such a selfish spirit as that!

14-16. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Every part of the body has its own special function. There are some secret vessels of which as yet the physiologists know very little. What may be the particular use of them has not yet been ascertained, but depend upon it, God has created no part of our body in vain and, in like manner, in the mystical body of Christ, every Christian has his own office, his own work, something that he can do that nobody else can do! And our great objective should be to find out what that work is and to give our whole strength to it, for the nourishing of the entire body of Christ.

17-19. This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling. That is a terrible expression, past feeling.

19-25. Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ; if indeed you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which God created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore putting away lying, as a rotten, worn-out garment that you could not bear to wear.

26. Speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members, one of another. Then, why should we lie, one to another? Should one hand try to deceive the other hand? Should the eye mislead the foot? Surely, the union of one member with all the other members should ensure its truthfulness!

26. Be you angry, and sin not. If you must be angry, (and you must, sometimes), take care that you do not sin when you are angry. It is rather a difficult thing to be angry and not to sin, yet, if a man were to see sin and not to be angry with it, he would sin through not being angry! If we are only angry, in a right spirit, with a wrong thing, we shall manage to obey the injunction of the Apostle, Be you angry, and sin not.

26. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Never let it outlive the day, but forgive before the sun goes down.   
27. Neither give place to the devil. A man who harbors malice in his heart invites the devil to come in and keeps a place ready for him.   
28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor. For laziness is generally the cause of theft. If a man would work for what he needed, he would not be tempted to steal it. Paul carries his argument very far, let him labor.   
28. Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. What a rise there is herefrom a thief up to a giver to him that needs! This is what the Grace of God does. Here is a man who used to take his neighbors goods if he could, but, when Divine Grace transforms him, he actually gives a share of his own goods to his poor neighborthat is a marvelous change!   
29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. I have heard unthinking people say, Well, if it is in your heart, you may as well speak itit is better out than in. I do not agree with them! If you had a barrel of whiskey in your house, that would certainly be a bad thing to be in your possession, but it would not do any hurt so long as you kept it unopened so that nobody could get at it! The mischief arises when people begin to drink it. Undoubtedly, it is an evil thing for you to have anything that is corrupt in your heart, but it will not be mischievous to other people until it begins to come out. So, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.   
29. But. Since some communication is sure to come out of your mouth, let it be a good one.   
29-31. That which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. Especially take heed of that evil speaking against which the Apostle warns you, for there are many people who cannot live without speakingthey must talk a great deal and they often say that which is false they invent evil, they twist an honest action and impute wrong motives to the doer of it! A few such persons in a community can cause much of heartache and distress. They little know what servants of Satan they may become. God help us to put away all evil speaking and all malice!   
32. And be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christs sake, has forgiven you. That is, very freely, very often, very abundantly, very thoroughly, very heartilyeven as God, for Christs sake, has forgiven you, so also do you.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3429 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED   
NO. 3429

A SERMON   
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Accepted in the Beloved.   
Ephesians 1:6.

I SHALL not attempt to do more than simply bring out the Truth of God and leave it with you. Fine words and gaudy sentences, with such a text as this, would be a vain attempt to paint the lily and gild refined gold. Let this bell ring and there is a depth of silver sweetness in it which will make the sanctified ear and heart glad with the fullness of joy. Accepted in the Beloved.

The Beloved. We all know to whom this refers. Our Lord is the Beloved of God. God is Love, and Christ is God. He is One with the Eternal Father and we can never tellit were impossible for us to guesswhat love there is between the Father and the Son, in their essential Deity. Jesus is the Beloved of angels. It is their joy to sing praise unto Him who was, and is, and is to come. He is the Beloved of all the white-robed band who have washed those robes in His blood and who sing, Unto Him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, to Him be glory. He is the Beloved of His saints, who are still wayfaring and warfaring here below. To Him their highest affections gather. He is dearer to them than all besides, the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. The Beloved. Not only Beloved, but, the Beloved. This is a name for all the saintsbelovedfor as John the Divine often writes in his Epistles, Beloved, now are we the sons of God. All the family are beloved, but Christ, the Elder Brother, is the Beloved. He is especially beloved, the choicest, the Chief, who in this has the preeminence. How many times did God testify concerning Him that He was the Beloved, when He said, This is my Beloved Son. These waters of Baptism remind us of the scene on Jordans banks, when the Holy Spirit bore witness that He was the Beloved Son of God. In later life, even in the depths of His humiliation, the Father testified that this was the Beloved Son. To us, the saints, He is our Beloved Spouse. We sing of Him, as the song has it, even the Song of Songs which is Solomons, My Beloved is mine, and I am His. We delight to think of Him under that title, under which the Church of God of old addressed Him. He is Beloved in all His offices to us, Beloved in all His Characters, Beloved in the manger, Beloved in the shame and spitting, Beloved on the Cross, Beloved on the Throne! We cannot think of Him without our heart beginning to beat high and fast

*He has engrossed my warmest love,   
No earthly charms my soul can move,   
I have a mansion in His heart,   
Nor death nor Hell can make us part.*

Of all the titles that are given to Christ, there may be some that excel in splendor, and others in sublimity, but surely this is among the chief for sweetness and expressiveness! It has the finger which touches our heart strings. The Beloved.

But now to the text. And the first thing I think I see in the text is that the Beloved is accepted of God. The second thing I see is that the saints are in the Beloved. And the third thing, that the saints are accepted in the Beloved. It is clear in the text that the Beloved is

I. ACCEPTED OF GOD.   
It will delight you if you try in meditation to get a hold of this thought, of how infinitely acceptable Christ must be to God the Father. All other forms of acceptance must have their limit and boundarybut the acceptability of the Son of God to the First Person of the Blessed Trinity must be altogether beyond either bottom or shore!   
The Beloved must be acceptable to God in His own Person. Is He not God, Himself, and how should it be that one Person in the Indivisible Unity should be otherwise than acceptable to the other? He is also Man, but He is Man born after a wondrous birth. The Son of the Highest. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mother. In His Godhead and in His Manhood, united as Mediator, He stands supreme in His Person. As Saul was head and shoulders above all the rest of the men of Israel, so has the Lord anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Who can be likened to Him in Person? Beauty, where can you draw, if your fancy shall take all its range, anything that shall be comparable to Him? Designer of all things, the Most High God, Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. What acceptance must there be in such an One as He is to the Most High God! You know that sometimes, in the sending of ambassadors, it is well to calculate whether the person chosen to be an ambassador will be adoptable to the foreign court. Now if he is a man of mean origin, a man ill-esteemed at home, it will be an insult to send him as an ambassador to another country. But if he is a man eminent and distinguished, admirable and admired, a man of high standing with his own Court, then he is the very person to represent the sovereignty of his country at another Court. See, then, what kind of Representative we have to send up to the Fathers Courts in HeavenOne who, while He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, is, nevertheless, God over all, blessed forever. My Soul, what better Ambassador could you have? To whom could you entrust your concerns one half as well as to One so inconceivably excellent, so superlatively blessed? He is, then, acceptable in His Person!  
And then, secondly, to God He is equally acceptable in His Character. God is perfectly pure. He cannot bear the slightest trace of sinand Jesus is holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners. God cannot look upon sin, as it is abhorrent to His Nature, but He can look upon Christ, for in Him was no sin. The prince of this world comes, says He, but has nothing on Me. God is Love, and to be acceptable with God in Character, one must be full of love. Now Jesus is such! Was there ever One who had such pity on the ignorant and such compassion on those that are out of the way? Was there ever such a tender heart elsewhere as that which glowed in the Masters bosom and gleamed from His loving eyes? He was a mass of love! He was Love performing and Love suffering. Love made Him live as He did and love made Him die as He did! And love still pervades His Naturenow that He lives on high, still loving the sons of men. Since God is Love, then, and Christ is full of love, His Character is suitable to God. You shall not find anything in Christ Jesus that does not conform with the God-like and the Divine. See Him where you will, He is humble, meek and lowlybut He is still august and sublime. Even when He puts on the garb of the peasant, woven from the top throughout, that garment shrouds the Deity and befits Him better than the purple robe befits Caesar on the throne! If He distributes alms, or says, I thirst. If He is tempest-tossed on the Sea of Galilee, if He rebukes the waves, if He feels Himself willing to die where mans suffering and weakness is most apparent, yet there is it most consistent with the Character of God, for the Centurion, who stood beholding, said, Certainly this was the Son of God. There is something congruous in the Nature of Christ to the Character of God and, therefore, His Character is always acceptable to the Most High.

Then, my Brothers and Sisters, God loves that which is incorruptible. Now our Savior was often tried, but He was never corrupted! He was tempted and bribed with the offer of a kingdom and, again, threatened with all the wrath of menbut He never started aside for a single moment from the straight line of integrity! His whole life was so pure, that although God charges His angels with folly, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, yet in Jesus He sees no folly and no imperfection! He, even suffering as Savior, is pure, infinitely pure and incorruptible in the sight of God! So, Beloved, the Character of Christ is altogether acceptable to God, as well as His Person.   
We may go a step further and say that the motive of Christ, as well as His outward Character, must have been infinitely acceptable to God. The motive of Jesus Christ, in coming here below, was altogether unselfish. Though He was rich, and had nothing to gain, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we (not Himself) through His poverty might be made rich. It can truly be said of Him, He saved others. Himself He could not save. Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. He emptied Himself out for us, and all out of pure love to those who had no love to Himout of disinterested affection to those whose best return is but a feeble thanks, for what can such poor worms as we ever render at our very best for love so amazing, so Divine? Well does Dr. Watts say in one of our best hymns   
*Words are but air, and tongues but clay, But Your compassion is Divine.*

O Savior! You could have no motive to move You but that which is pure, and high, and lofty! Cleansed from everything like self, Jesus came that He might honor the Justice of God. He would have man saved, but in such a way as not to derogate from the Justice of the Most High. He would have no spots upon Gods Law, no slur upon the Divine Character and, there, as He kneels amidst the olives of Gethsemane, or there, as He staggers beneath the Cross, or there, as He gives His hands to the nails and His feet to the cruel iron, He is vindicating the Eternal Justice and severity of God by His labors, by His griefs and by His Sacrifice of Himself to death! He must, then, moved by a motive so high as this, have been infinitely acceptable to Heaven!

He was, then, acceptable in His Person, acceptable in His Character and acceptable in His inner motive from which that outward Character sprang! And He was also acceptable in all His work which He did on Earth. Cast your eyes along that work for a minute. In the first part of His life that work was active. In the second part and also in the first, there was a passive work being carried on. There was an active work of obedience to the Fathers will. And what obedience it was! Never for a moment asking to be excused from a command, or to have a release from the sacred Sacrificeit was always work with all His heart, till He could say, The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up.

*Such was Your truth and such Your zeal, Such deference for Your Fathers will.   
Such love and meetness so Divine,   
I would transcribe and make them mine.*

The whole life of is the paragon of perfection, the mirror in which every virtue is reflected! He could not be otherwise than acceptable to God in the active righteousness of His life. And when we come to His passive righteousness, what shall I say of that? Track Him, my Brothers and Sisters, to the Garden and hear Him say, Not as I will, but as You will. Watch Him before Pilate, when He obeys God by keeping silent, and like a sheep before her shearers, He opened not His mouth. Follow Him then, and behold Him on the Cross and note how careful He is that the Scriptures may be fulfilledhow still, with whole-hearted consecration, He never starts back for a moment from the paying of the great ransom price which was to deliver His people from eternal bondage! There cannot be any doubt in your minds, but that the blessed Advocate and Surety of our souls must be accepted before the Lordin the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of an acceptance that we can scarcely understand when we see Him giving up all the floods of His life, pouring them out like water before the Lord! In Person, in Character, in motive, in work, Jesus Christ is infinitely accepted!

Now that He was so accepted is not only clearly to be seen by these reflections, but the fact is proved by this, that the Father raised Him from the dead! He saw no corruption, but He must have remained in the tomb, or the work had not been finished. He was justified in the Spirit by the Resurrection from the dead. His acceptance of God was proved when God brought Him from the dead! So, too, His ascending. His ascending up on high and leading captivity captive proves that He was accepted! His admission into Heaven proves that He was accepted! His sitting at the right hand of the Father proves that He has finished the work! And His present reigning over all the world in His mediatorial government is the reward of His sufferingsand His Second Advent, for which we look with devout anticipationis to be a yet fuller declaration that He is the Beloved of God, and infinitely acceptable in the Fathers sight!

Thus much, a few stirrings, as it were, of the surface of this great sea touching, as a swallow does, the waves. I have given you but these few hints. Think them over. And now, and very briefly

II. ALL BELIEVERS ARE IN CHRIST ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED. They are in the Beloved, then, or in Christ. How are Believers in Christ? They are in Christ as their Representative. Just as the whole human race was in the loins of Adam, so the whole elect people were in the loins of Christ. It is said by the Apostle, Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him. So were all of us in the loins of Jesus Christalways there in Him, for is it not written, He shall see His seed? And we are His seed! We spring in our new life from Him. He is the corn of wheat which was cast into the ground to die, that it might not abide alone, and now it brings forth much fruit. We are in Christ as the branch is in the vine, as the stone is in the building. We are in Christ as the members are in the head. He represents us. When we talk of counting heads, we mean counting the whole body, so Christ, the Head, represents all the members and He stands for us. We were in Christ, Beloved, according to the words of the Holy Spiritwe were in Christ in our election, according as He has chosen us in Him. There is a personal election of every child of God, but that personal election is connected with Christ   
*Christ is My first elect, He said,   
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head.* We were in Christ in the suretyship engagements of the eternal Covenant. What Christ spoke before the world was, He spoke as for us. His prescient eye foresaw our existence, foreknew our ruin. He espoused us unto Himself, then, and stood in the Council Chambers of Eternity, the Surety and Sponsor of His peoples souls!  
We are in Christ, according to Scripture, by judicial dealing. That is to say, God deals with Christ as if He were dealing with us. Awake, O swordagainst whom? Against the sinning sheep? No, against the Shepherd, against the Man who is My Fellow, says the Lord. For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way, and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. In Him in the choice, in Him in the Covenant, and then in Him in Gods dealings with Christ as a Judge!  
So now, further, blessed be His name, we are in Him by a vital union. There is a living unity between Christ and His people, as between the husband and the wife, as between the branch and the stem. We are one with Him by vital union. Have you realized this, Believer? Do you seek to live as one that is one with Jesus? Do you try to act as one that has learned his unity to the heavenly One, to the Second Adam? It is so. If you have believed, you are one with Him!   
And we are one with Him by a fixed decree of God that never shall be broken. Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Who shall tear one limb from the sacred body of Jesus? Who shall cut away one truly quickened branch from that celestial vine? He preserves those who are in Him! He covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trustHis truth is our shield and buckler! You may divide and you must divide the dearest bonds of earth, but you shall never cut the knot that was tied in old eternity, which bound Christ to His people. I in them, and they in Me, that they may be perfect in one. There shall never come a time when He will be ashamed to call them brethren, and never to one of them whom the Father has given Him shall there come a time when they shall refuse to call Him Master and Lord. We are in Him, then!   
Now this is a great mystery. The Apostle always speaks of it as such. But it is one of the most blessed mysteries in the whole compass of Revelation. Dear Friend, never forget that God does not deal with you as an individualHe deals with you as in Christ. If you stood as an individual, you would perish, for you will be sure to fall. You are so weak and frail and apt to sin, that with the best resolutions and intentions, you would be sure to turn aside and, therefore, the blessed Father has put you in a safer placeHe has put you in Christ! And now your interests are Christs interests. As I have often told you, you cannot drown a mans foot unless you can drown his headand if our Head is in Heaven, we are safe. And He, our Head, is there! When your vessel tosses in the storm, you may hear a voice that says, Fear not, the boat is safe; you carry Jesus and all His fortune. Christ is one with His peoplethey must sink or swim together. Has He not, Himself, said it, Because I live, you shall live also? The saint, then, is in Him. Now we come to the full text, and that is, that

III. THE SAINTS ARE ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.   
Their persons are accepted. You know there are some persons that are not acceptable to you. You would sooner live in Heaven with them, forever, than you would like to live a quarter of an hour with them on earth! There are some people of that kind to whom we take a very natural objection. And I suppose it is not possible, although we would treat them always with kindness and so on, that we would ever desire them as companions. They are not acceptable to us. And now it does seem amazing that we, who have not any personal recommendation, but very much in us that might render us obnoxious to God, are nevertheless acceptable in our persons, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Yes, you with no talents, you with no wealth, no position, no great friendsyou who can do so little when you do your bestyou, though the garment you wear is not of the finest, but of the very lowliest material, are acceptable to God! God looks not according to the outward appearance, but He looks to the heart. And whenever He sees a simple trust in Jesus, which is a token of our being in Jesus, our person is acceptable to Him because, you see, He does not look at us as we are, but He looks at us through Christ! He looks through the wounds of Jesus upon us poor sinners, as a verse of one of our hymns runs   
*He in them the sinner sees,   
Looks through Jesus wounds on me.*   
If one of you were away now in India, and after you had been living there for years, you saw a person very poor and ragged, who nevertheless said, I used to be a servant to your mother, why, it would bring such recollections of that country homestead and of the dear old times when you were one of the happy family, that I am sure your heart would be touched and though there might be no reason whatever in the person why you should relieve him, yet because of his connection with that dear name of mother, perhaps in Heaven, you would put your hand into your purse at once! Now God sees such a connection between us and Christ that He esteems us for Christs sake! My Son loved that man, He says. My Son died for that woman. My Son on the tree laid down His life for that poor, humble, penitent one. I love him for My Sons sake. Now will you try and get a hold, if you can, by faith, that sweet thought, that your personyou, you yourself, are accepted before God in the Beloved this nightand although you cannot accept yourself, but find much to complain of, yet, still, if you are in Jesus, you are   
*So near, so very near to God,   
You cannot nearer be!   
For in the Person of His Son,   
You are as near as He.   
So dear, so very dear to God,   
You cannot dearer be   
The love wherewith He loves His Son,   
Such is His love to thee!*   
Such is His love to me, you may say.   
Now, because the person is accepted, the next thing is our prayers and praises are accepted in the Beloved. We sometimes kneel down to pray, but we cannot pray. Those that use a book and bring God dead prayers can always be alike, but that which comes from the heart variesand there are times with living prayers when the most you can do is to groan. A sigh, a sob, is the most you can get out. But a mother would sooner hear her own child sob than another child sing. There is music about that dear childs voice that moves her heart and touches her spirit. And so the inward meanings of a broken heart are music in the ears of the Infinite Jehovah, and He accepts the sincere prayers of His people, let them be as broken as they may! And as for our praise, well, we do not always sing our praiseswe feel them, we talk them, and when we do sing them, our voices are not, perhaps, as sweet as we would desire. Never mind. Our Lord does not judge our hymns by the same tests as gentlemen of musical tastes would do! He hears the ring of the heart and if that is right, there may be a false note or two, perhaps, in the voice, but if the right note is in the heart, the praises are accepted, and the prayers are, accepted in the Beloved, for our prayers do not come up before God as they are. It is with us, as it is with some poor men. They want to get up a petition. They come, perhaps, to us. They want us to petition to some great man for some help. Well, write our your petition. They bring it. Oh, we say, it will never do to send thathere is this word spelt wrong, that sentence is ungrammatical. You have not addressed him at all in the right style. Come, I will take it, and I will make a fair copy of it for you, and send that with my name appended. It may have some weight. So does Christ do with us. He takes our poor blotted and blurred prayers and He just re-writes them, and then He presents them to His Fathers Throne. He takes the incense we bring and puts it into His own golden censor. He puts in the coals of fire and then, as He swings that censer to and fro in His own Priesthood before the Throne of God, your prayers and mine, your praises and mine, smoke like sweet perfume before the Presence of the Most High, accepted in the Beloved.   
And, Brothers and Sisters, just so is it with all the work we do for Christ and all the gifts we bring. It happens on Sunday, perhaps, sometimes when the bread is bought and the supply got in for the family, that you have very little to give. Well, here is a penny for the Orphanage. You must give God something, you think. You would give Him more if you could. You only wish you had tens of thousands of pounds you could give. Well, it is very little, and nobody knows who gives it, still, it is accepted in the Beloved. If it is given for His sake, I tell you that every penny is accepted in the Beloved. Does not the Lord say so? The two mites that make a farthing, which were the widows living, were so accepted that He could not help speaking about themand publishing to all the world in this Book, the Bible, to be handed down throughout all timeas long as there shall be a Bible in the Christian Church! The other night you talked with a little child, or you gave away a tract. You tried to do somethingto lead someone to Christ. Well, that was all accepted in the Beloved. You did it with a single eye to Gods Glory. You thought you did it very badly and that there was much imperfection mingled with itbut Christ washed it alland when it was all fair and clean, He presented it and it was accepted!  
And here is a mercy (I will add only one other word to this line of thought)the whole life of the Christian, so far as it is the outgrowth of the life within, is accepted in the Beloved. That morning you awoke, when the heart rose up in prayer for keeping during the day. That bended knee at the bedside, when the soul commits itself to the Father of Spirits. That family gathering, when the prayer is offered that the household may be kept during the day. That blessing at the eating of bread. That thankful heart to God, when the mornings meal is finished. Those brief sudden prayers during the business of the day. That word put in for Christ when the conversation ran the other way. That thankful return home at night. That evening prayer. That lifting up of the soul to God in thankfulness to carry you through another dayall that, the humblest part of it, was all accepted in the Beloved. Brothers and Sisters, it is very, very delightful to think that if I preach a sermon for Christ it is accepted, but I want you to think that if you housewives are about the house, doing your business there for your husband and children, you are as much accepted there as I am when I am preaching! That Prayer Meeting was very acceptable. Yes, and I know how acceptable it was when you sat up that night with a sick man. It was done for Jesus sake. The man who addresses thousands is accepted, but he that sits down and talks, even to a little child, is just as much accepted, and accepted in the same way, too, for it is only in the Beloved that either the big or the little can be at all! The bullock was offered and God accepted it. The kid was offered and God accepted that. And the reason was because they were both put upon the same altar, and both burnt with the same fire. Christ is the Altar, and Christ the Fireand so our sacrifices are accepted in the Beloved.   
I think these words were the favorite words of that dear man of God, Mr. Harrington Evans, Accepted in the Beloved. He used to often repeat them in his sermons and, if I remember rightly, when he was dying and his deacons needed a message to be given to the Church, to let them know what was the state of mind of their pastor at the time of death, he said, Go and tell them I am accepted in the Beloved. Oh, dear Hearer can you say this? There is more eloquence in these words than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or in all the glowing periods of Caesar! To say, I am accepted in the Beloved, is better than to be able to say, I am the owner of the Indies, or the possessor of the world. Accepted in the Beloved. Remember, there is many a religious person who is not accepted in the Beloved, for the moralists, the religionists that like not Christ, are not accepted! They pray, and they read the Scriptures, and they attend their place of worship. They are baptizedthey come to the altarbut it is all nothing if they do not come to Christ! All these things are nothing to any of them if they are not in Christ. We hold that we should baptize none but those who profess their belief in Christ. And it seems to us that apart from a saving faith in Christ, it is a mere mockeryand if given to children, or even to an unconverted personit is more likely to make them think there is efficacy in the sacrament than to do them any kind of good. Thus we would have you touch nothing at the Lords Table until you have first come to Jesus. Then the Baptismand then the Lords Table will be profitable helps to you in remembering Christ, and you will be accepted in them, in the Beloved. But you must get in Him first, for Baptism is nothing, and the Lords Supper nothing, without Christ! First, you must get the Substance, and then the shadow will follow. And these things are only shadowsthey only set forth the Substance! And if any come to the shadow, tonight, who have not got the Substance, they have no business to come and on their heads will be the guilt. We must first be in Him. Whether you are an open sinner or outwardly moral, remember you are not accepted, otherwise, for it is not your conduct, not your outward life that will do apart from Christ. It is union to Christand faith brings us that! A simple trust in Jesus, and we are in Jesus and accepted in Jesus! But without that, we are without Christ, without hope, and alien from the commonwealth of Israel.

The Lord bless this simple meditation to His people, and His shall be the praise forever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EPHESIANS 1; 2:1.**

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He wishes them Divine Grace, first, and peace afterwards, which is the right and natural order. There is no lasting peace without Grace. There is no peace worth having which does not spring from a work of Grace in the soul. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How dear the Father is when we view Him in association with the Redeemer. Never do the saints seem to delight so much in God as when they behold Him in the Person of Jesus Christ. Then is He inexpressibly lovely to us and we preach Him with joy and delight. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Blessed, says he, be God, who has blessed us. Well may we bless Him with our feeble thanks who has blest us with His mighty mercies! Nothing makes a man bless God like Gods blessing him! He has blessed us, says the Apostle, with all spiritual blessings. The children of God have not only some blessings, but all they need! They are all theirs for all time and for all eternitybut they are all in Christ. There is no blessing out of Christ. All the fullness of blessing dwells in Jesus and in Him only! And if you would be blessed, you must come to Christ for a blessing. He has blest us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

4. According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The first great blessing of the Covenant of Grace is our election. We were chosen, but chosen in Christchosen not because we were holy, but chosen that we should be holy! The great objective of the Divine choice is our holiness. And let no man say that He is chosen of God unless God is working in Him to this Divine end, namely, holiness of character!

5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. After election comes adoption. Men are not by nature the children of Godthey are heirs of wrath. And this is very clear because a man never adopts his own children. But adoption in itself proves that by nature we are not the children of GodHe adopts us. Then are you begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Happy they who know the adoptionwho feel in themselves the spirit of children and can cry, Abba, Father, as they look up to God tonight! This is in Christ Jesus, for nothing comes to us except by Him.

6. To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved. Christ is so acceptable to God that that acceptance is sufficient to spread over all those who are in Him. And tonight every Believer here is accepted before God, but it is through Jesus Christ. Do notice that! Nothing comes but by that silver pipe. He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

7. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. Redemption by Christ, forgiveness by Christ, still everything through the Crucified! Those dear wounds of His are the five sacred founts from which a world of blessing flows to bless poor needy sinners. Well may we say, None but Christ, for, indeed, there is none but Christ who can bless us!

8-10. Wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth: even in Him. All the things that are in Christ are to be gathered togetherbelieving Jews no longer to be divided from believing Gentiles. Today the Church of God is separateddisfigured and weakened by divers sects and parties, but it shall not be always so. There is a gathering under the Christ and He will, in the fullness of time, perfectly accomplish it.

11, 12. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. Some people are dreadfully frightened at that word, predestination. I am always astonished when members of the Church of England are so, for if they will turn to their own Articles, they will find that the high and comfortable Doctrine of Predestination is taught there. It is to be wisely handled, but it is not to be gagged and sent into a corner, as it is by some. Are there Truths in Scripture that are not to be taught? If any say so, then I charge them with being like the Jesuit who hides a part of what he believes! No, the whole of Gods Truth is to be declared, and whatever we find in this Book, that are we to state! The keeping back of precious Truths of God will be required of such as are guilty of it at the Last Great Day.

13-23; Chapter 2:1. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. So that what He did for Christ, He has done for you! He raised Him and He has raised you. And having begun thus to quicken you, He will go on to lift you up and to exalt you till you sit with Him upon His Throne!

The only question, dear Friends, is thisDo we belong to those of whom Paul here speaks? We look to the first verse to see who they are and we find he is addressing the faithful in Christ Jesus. That is, those who are believing in Christ Jesus. If we are believing in Him, then all the privileges which are mentioned in this Chapter belong to us and we are quickenedand we shall be exalted even as Christ is, at the Fathers right hand! So be it, gracious Lord!

Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #471 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED   
NO. 471

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He has made us accepted in the Beloved.   
Ephesians 1:6.

THE Beloved! This was a golden name which the ancient Church in her most joyous moments was likely to give to the Anointed of the Lord. When the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in her land, her love note was sweeter than either bird or turtle, as she sung, My Beloved is mine and I am His. He feeds among the lilies. Ever in her song of songs does she call Him by that delightful name, My Beloved!

Even in the long winter when idolatry had withered the garden of the Lord, her Prophets found space to cease from uttering the thunders of judgment, to lay aside the burden of the Lord for a little season and to say, as Isaiah did, Now will I sing to my Well-Beloved a song of my Beloved touching His vineyard. Though the saints had never seen His face, though as yet He was not made flesh, nor had dwelt among us, nor had man beheld His glorythe glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Divine Grace and truth, yet He was the consolation of Israel, the hope and joy of all the chosen, the Beloved of all those who were upright before the Most High.

Brethren, in the summer days of the Church, let us not fail to call Christ our Beloved. Both in our prayers, and public songs, and in those nearer and dearer approaches which we make to Him in privatewhen we may use more tender epithets than we would venture to do in a mixed assembly, we are likely to speak of Christ as the best Beloved of our soul and to feel that He is to us very precious, the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely.

So true is it that the Church loves Christ, and claims Him as her Beloved, that the Apostle dares to defy the whole universe to separate her from the love of Christ, and declares that neither persecutions, distress, affliction, peril, or the sword, have been able to do it. No, he joyously boasts, In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us. And he concludes his bold utterance by declaring that he is persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We think we should not be trespassing into the realms of imagination if we ventured to say that Christ is also the Beloved of the angels. To Him cherubim and seraphim continually cry. For in that thrice-repeated strain, there is a word for the second Person of the Trinity, as well as for the first and the thirdHoly, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. And, certainly, the blood-bought call Him their Beloved, for their incessant strain is, Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood,

unto Him be glory forever and ever.   
Yet, my dear Friends, the main reason why Christ is thus styled by the   
Holy Spirit, the Beloved, doubtless is because He is the Beloved of the   
Fathers heart. This, said the mysterious voice from Heaven in the midst   
of the waters of Jordan, this is my Beloved Son in whom I am wellpleased. And again, at the resurrection of Lazarus, there came the same   
voice from Heaven, announcing the perpetuity of the Fathers love. None of  
us can tell how dear Jesus must be to His Father. We have, however,   
abundant proofs of the fact that He is very near unto Him, for He is privy  
to all His Fathers counsels.   
From the counsels of the Most High, Christ was never absent. When  
there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no fountains   
abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills,   
was I brought forth. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the   
fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the   
heavens, I was there. When he set a compass upon the face of the depth.  
When He established the clouds above. When He strengthened the fountains of the deep. When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters   
should not pass His command. When He appointed the foundations of the   
earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him. And I was daily  
His delight, rejoicing always before Him.   
Let us make man, said God. in Our own imagecalling Christ into   
creations work. Without Him was not anything made that was made, is  
the declaration of John the Divine. Beside this, we know that everything  
which is done of the Father by His Divine decree is that He may glorify His   
Son. While, on the other hand, the Son lived and died, and lives again  
that He may glorify the Father. Such is their mutual interest in one another, that we cannot suppose a relationship closer, nor a love more intense than that which exists between the Father and the Son. It were foolish and ridiculous in me to attempt to dive into the awful depths of the  
Divine unity. We know that the Father is One with the Son, and that Jesus is one with Jehovah.  
The Unity of Essence is a well so deep, that I cannot expect to find its   
bottom. And the love which springs up from this essential Unity must be   
more deep and profound than the wit of man can guess, or than the language of man can utter. I repeat the confession of our ignoranceit is impossible for us to form even a guess of the intensity of the affection that   
must exist between the eternal Father and Jesus Christ, His Sonsince   
their essential Union from which this affection springs is a doctrine beyond our comprehensionand is meekly to be received of our faith. Certainly we know that never was the term, Beloved, so full of meaning.   
Never did human word become so Divinely rich as when God Himself, by   
the Holy Spirit, applied it to Jesus the Beloved of the Father. No more, however, concerning this word, the Beloved, except that I   
trust there are many of us here who can thus salute our Covenant Head.   
Yes, He is very dear to us. We love Him because He first loved us. The love   
of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and it has kindled   
in our poor souls a flame undying, which neither life nor death shall   
quench, but which shall burn brighter and brighter till it consumes flesh   
and self, and we shall be all on flame with love to Christ.   
Now, dear Friends, having thus brought forward the title of Christ, I   
shall, in dependence upon the Eternal Spirit, call your attention, first of   
all, to the words, in the Beloved, or positive union . Secondly, to the   
words accepted in the Beloved, or glorious condition. And then to the   
whole text, He has made us accepted in the Beloved, or Divine operation. I. First then, here is a matter most worthy of your best and most profound thoughtsIN THE BELOVED, or, POSITIVE UNION. A thousand sermons would never exhaust the theme of the union of the   
Church with Christ. No theology is sound which does not recognize this.  
No experience can be very profound which does not lead the soul more  
clearly and more fully to rejoice in this most glorious Truth of God. Probably it is a doctrine more suitable to advanced Christians than to young  
Believers. But where the Lord enables the heart to feed upon it, it will be   
found to be food at once nourishing, delicious, satisfying and strengthening. They who feed upon it will be found like Daniel and his companions,  
to be fairer in countenance and fatter in flesh than any others. 1. In explaining this positive union, let us begin by saying, in Christ  
that is, in His heart, and in His heart from all eternity. With prescient eye   
Christ beheld His people before they were yet formed. He looked forward   
through eternity and the rolling years of time, and He foresaw that God   
would make man, and that man in Adam would fall and be ruined. His   
eyes looked over all the sons of Adam, and selected those whom He saw fit   
according to the counsel of His willand these, at once, were put into His   
heart to be His darlings, His favorites forever and ever.   
It was not in time that Christ first wrote the names of His people upon   
His heartit was a time before all times, when there was no day but the   
Ancient of Days. When creations first year had not commenced. When all  
things slept in the mind of God as a thought, but had not come forth from  
His hands as a deed. We look upon the rocks with their long deposits of  
sand and shellswe go deeper down and see the long ages that must have   
passed while the stony strata were being formed. We wonder at the period   
that the aqueous and igneous rocks must have occupied in their formation. And sometimes we are staggered at the thought of what a great thing   
time is.   
We find we cannot grasp the idea of, in the beginning God created the   
heavens and the earth. It is so far back that the wings of our imagination   
flag before they reach it as a resting place. But there was an eternity before all this. And all these ages are but as the drop of a bucket compared   
with the deep and bottomless sea of the eternity of God. Yet, when we fly  
back into the dread eternity, where thought is lost and mind fails, we discover in the breast of Christ eternal thoughts of love towards His children.   
Is it not a joy that can make your spirits dance, like David before the ark,  
that we were always Jesus Beloved ones, always in the heart of Him   
whose heart was afterwards in the fullness of time pierced for us? Has He not said, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore   
with loving kindness have I drawn you? As the Father has loved Me,  
even so have I loved you? That is, without beginningever since there   
was a Father and a Christ. It were blasphemy to suppose that Gods love  
to Jesus was not always existent, or that Christ had a beginning in the   
Fathers affections. Even from that time Jesus had chosen His people and   
they were in His heart. Beloved, as they were in His heart, so they have been in His heart ever since. When they fell in Adam they did not fall out of Christ. When they lived in this world a life of iniquity, yet still there was His great love with which He loved them, even when they were dead in  
trespasses and sins.   
When they scorned His Grace, defied His love, trampled on His Cross,  
and despised His blood, yet still never from His heart were they erased, for  
they had been engraved there too deeply by the nails for sin to destroy the   
remembrance. And now, today, now that we are continually backsliding,   
nothing has been able as yet to tear us from His heart. We are there and   
we shall be there, in deaths dark gloom and in eternitys mysterious   
splendornear to Jesus still, for is it not writtenHe hates putting   
away? Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them   
unto the end.   
So, then, Beloved, we are in Christ in the sense that we are in Christs   
heart, and we always were so if we are His people.   
2. But, secondly, we are also in Christs Book. Having loved us, we were   
chosen in Him and elected by His Father. We were not chosen separately   
and distinctly and as individuals alone and apartwe were chosen in

Christ  
. As Watts well puts it   
*Christ, is My first elect, He said;*

*Then chose our souls in Christ, our Head.* By Christs love we were one with Him. The Fathers election chose the whole Christ, both the Head, and the members, too. Christ can well say, In Your book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. We all know that Christ is elect and precious. God singled out the humanity of Christ from many thousands of forms that He might have created. He ordained that the Seed of the womanthe Child that was born in Bethlehem and laid in the mangershould become the Body and the human soul which should be taken into union with Divinity. Here was election.

And as Christ was thus chosen both in the Divine and Human natures, so are all His people chosenchosen in Him. Blessed fact! The same register which includes Christ as first-born, includes all the Brethren. And until the flames of Hell can consume the record which certifies Christ as a Son of God, our sonship in Christ towards God must remain safe from all the attacks of Satanic craft. Disprove Christs Sonship, and you disprove ours. Prove the union of Christ with God as His Son and since Christs people are in Him, you prove their sonship, too. Look down the red roll which God wrote with His eternal finger, according to the counsel of His will and you see the names of all that should enter into eternal life.

They are all there secure, because the first one is secure. And until the pen of Hell can run through the first one in the catalog, it shall never be able to run through any of the othersfor there stand the names of all the elect, covered, protected and defended, by the name of Christ, which stands at the head. We are in that Book which is sealed with seven seals, which none but the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open.

3. Thirdly, we are in Christs hands. We are in Christs heart as our heavenly Lover. We are in Christs Book as the Medium of our election. We are in Christs hands as our Surety. You will remember, Beloved, that when Laban gave up his flock to Jacob, Jacob took them upon the condition of suretyship. Jacob said unto Laban, That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto you. I bore the loss of it. Of my hands did you require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Now, all those who the Father gave to Christ were bestowed upon Christ as a surety and at the Last Great Day, at the Redeemers hands will God require the souls of all that were given to Him.

He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, responsible as the Mediator, responsible to Him who possesses all. Sponsor for His people, Surety for all the chosen, He stands at this hour before the eternal Throne. And do you think, Beloved, He will lose us? Never! He has made us the choicest objects of His care. Shall His eyes sleep? Shall His heart forget? Shall His hands grow weary? Shall He lose the force and strength which anciently He possessed? He has sworn by Himself that He will bring us safely to the Fatherwill He be defeated? He has said, I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hands

And shall the infernal lion rend that which He has deigned to keep? What? Shall He put His hands upon His people and shelter them there and clutch them as the choicest treasure and the rarest jewel that He ever had, and shall death or Hell unlock His fingers or wrench His chosen from His mighty grasp? Who shall defeat Omnipotence, or pluck the sinner from the Almighty grasp? Rejoice, Believers, you are saved just because you are in the hands of Christ. I marvel at those who try to slip from that text, None shall pluck them out of My hand, and think that souls can be lost after thatfor the text does not admit of any other meaning than their safety. They shall never perish, and I give unto them eternal life, are plain, literal, positive statements, which none can misunderstand. Happy are the men who are thus in Christ.

4. But, fourthly, we are in Christs loins. This may convey a thought somewhat different from being in Christs hands. We were all of us in the loins of Adam, and have all sprung from him by natural generation. Adam was our Federal Head. All his acts were representative acts. While he was obedient, we were obedient in him. Had he continued obedient, we, his descendants, should have been partakers of the privileges which accrue to obedience. Adam offended. We offended in him. Being the inheritors of his nature we have partaken of his original corruption. And being moreover in him as our representative, we became partakers of his condemnation. In Adam all die. By the offense of one man, condemnation came upon all men.

As being, then, in the loins of Adam, we felland we should have fallen into everlasting perdition, if we, as Gods chosen, had not been also in the loins of Christ. But all the chosen were in the loins of Christ from all eternity, so that what was done He did for them. When He obeyed the Law, and made it honorable, they are regarded before God as having kept the Law, and having honored it in every jot and tittle. When He did hang upon the tree, the chosen who were in Him were virtually suffering the wrath of God. Justice looks upon the chosen as though they themselves had suffered all that Christ suffered, as though they had drunk the wormwood and the gall, and had descended into the lowest depths.

When He was buried we were buried with Him. For we are dead with Christ unto the world and buried in Baptism with Him unto death. When Christ ascended from the tomb we rose in Him. He rose again, not as a private individual, but for our justification. Virtually every elect soul rose

from the eternal death of its deserved perdition in the day when Christ startled the keepers and rolled away the stone. And when Christ ascended up on High we ascended in Him. Up with Him we entered into the spheres. And with Him, today, we are risen in Christ, and made with Him to sit in heavenly places, even in Christ Jesus.

Today, Beloved, the language of the Psalmist is more true than he thought concerning man, You made Him to have dominion over the works of Your hands, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas. We see not all things yet put under man on earth. But we see Jesus, who as the representative Man sits in Heaven, triumphant over all things, having all things put forever under His feet. And representatively under our feet, too, since we are in Christ. Just as the Apostle Paul argues concerning Levi, that Levi is inferior to Christ, for, he says, Abraham was less than Melchisedec, for without doubt the less is blessed of the greater, so also Levi was less than Melchisedec, for he was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him.

So Beloved, as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchisedec, so we were in the loins of Christ and paid the debt due to Divine justice, gave to the Law its fulfillment, and to wrath its satisfaction. In the loins of Christ we have passed through the tomb already, and have entered into that which is within the veil and are made to sit down in heavenly places, even in Him. This day the chosen of God are one with Christ and in the loins of Christ.

5. As we are in the heart of Christ, in the Book of Christ, in the hands of Christ, and in the loins of Christ, there is yet another thought dearer and sweeter still. We are in the Person of Christ, for we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. When the Spirit of God comes into the sinner and convicts him of sin, that sinner is led to look to Christ, only, for his salvation,. Christ then becomes unto him the Way and the Life. By the mysterious operations of the quickening Spirit, the sinner begins to live a spiritual life.

Now, in the moment when the spiritual life was first given, there commenced in that soul a vital and personal union with the Person of Christ Jesus. There had always been in that soul a secret mystical union in the Divine purpose. But now there comes to be a union in effect and the soul is in Christ from that hour, in a sense in which it never was before. Oh, do you understand what it is to be in Christ vitally? Beloved, no explanations can set this forth. The natural man discerns not the things which are of the Spirit of God. These are things which must be known experimentally by each man for himself.

Have you felt a life in you that is far superior to the vital principle which you inherit from your parent? Have you known that regeneration has given you another existence which generation did not confer upon you? Have you felt principles alive within which no education could have developed, and which no persuasion could have implanted? Have you within you the living and incorruptible seed of God, which abides forever? Have you been made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped that corruption which is in the world through lust?

Have you been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? If so, the life in you is Christ in you, the hope of Glory. And your life is sustained by the fact that you are one with Christ. Suck the nourishment of your life from Him just as the branch draws from the trunk the sap whereby it is invigorated and made to live

*I can do nothing without You,   
My strength is wholly Yours.   
Withered and barren should I be   
If severed from the vine.*

I trust, Brethren, that we are in union with Christ, not in theory, but in factnot as a matter of doctrine, but as a matter of experience, till we can say, Christ is in me and I am in Him. The life that I live in the flesh is no more I, but Christ that lives in me. In the Beloved, then, is a thought which is not very easy for us to bring out in so short a space of time.

Now, I want to put you to the test this morning, by appealing to you all whether you know anything about this. A great many will say, Well, it is a very odd thing, we do not understand it. Take heed to yourselves, then. Deal honestly with your spirits. Inasmuch as you do not know what it is to be in Christ, then you are without Christ. And then you are without hope, and there remains nothing for you but a fearful looking for judgment and of fiery indignation. No man out of Christ can be saved. In Christ the branch lives. But divided from Christ, men gather up the useless branches and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

Come, now, I want to try you. The first question I ask you, to ascertain whether you are in Christ, is thisIs He all your dependence? For the union of the saint with Christ is set forth by the union of the stone with the building. Now, the stone in the building lies upon the foundation. There it rests and abides, being cemented fast to it. Do you rest upon Christ? I ask you, is He all your trust? There is a blessed text in one of the Prophets, I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place and they shall hang upon him all the glory of his fathers house, as well the cups as the flagons, they shall all hang on him.

Do you so hang on Him? Can you feel today that without a falsehood all your trust on Him is set, that you bring from Him all your standing, all your confidence, all your peace? If so, let us hope that your union is a true one. And if it is so, then, as I have sometimes seen stones in the old walls of Roman castles which could scarcely have been separated from the fabric, even by gunpowder itself, without the blasting of the fabric, tooso is it with you. Unless the foundations can be removed, you cannot be moved, for if you depend on Him by a living faith, you are so a part of Christ that the living stone has grown into the living foundation and separated from Him you never can be in time or in eternity.

Another question. If you are today in Christ, then do you bring forth some fruit unto Him? For Christians are represented as being in Christ, as the branch is in the vine. Every branch in Me, said Christ, that bears fruit, He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit. What do you say? What are your fruits? Is there humility of mind? Holiness? Do you seek to walk like Jesus did? My dear Hearers, this is a very sharp question to put to you, but I put it to each of you personally, for by your works you must be judged at the Last Great Day. His servants you are, whom you obey. If you give yourselves up to the pleasures of this world, to the lusts of the

flesh, to your own selfishnessthen you are the servants of sin. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows that shall  
he also reap. Do you of the Spirit bring forth fruits of the Spirit? Do you   
walk and act as the elect of God, putting on a heart of mercy and compassion? Have you a single eye to Christs glory, and do you live to His service? If so, then thanks to God, no pruning knife shall cut away the   
branch that brings forth fruit. It is the branch which brings forth no fruit,   
which is not in Christ vitally, that is to be severed, cast away. But if you   
are in Him so as to bring forth fruit unto Him, then fruit to eternal life   
shall you bear evermore.  
Another questionDo you love Christ? Does your heart go out after   
Him? Do you pant to be in His arms? Is His company your Heaven? Is His   
absence your Hell? Remember, another figure which is used, is the union   
of the husband with the wife. Marriages that are made in Heaven are cemented not by gold or beauty, but by love. In Christ there is an infinite   
love towards His people, insomuch that He left His Father and did cleave   
unto His wife, and they two became one flesh. This is a great mystery,   
said Paul, when he spoke concerning Christ and His Church. Are you   
wedded to Him by an affection which no time can alter except it be to   
deepen it? Are there ties which bind your heart to Him, which torture and   
racks cannot separate?   
If there are, then you are married unto One that will never put you   
away, One that will never leave you a widow, for your Maker is your Husband and He loves faithfully. He is One that calls you His Hephzibah, His  
soul delights in you. And your land He calls Beulah, for He has married it.   
Is there such a union? Are you thus in Christ? Then a last question and I   
will leave this pointIs there a life in you? Is Christ the life of your spirit?   
If you tell me you have nothing more in you than what nature gave you,   
then you are in natures death. There is a supernatural life which is imparted by the Holy Spirit.   
Therefore, we read in Scripture that Believers are one with Christ as the   
members are one with the head. They are one in living union. If you cut   
away the head, the whole dies. Yes, and mark you, the head dies, too. So   
Christ is one with us if we are really His. Because He lives we shall live   
also. If we die, Christ dies, and if Christ lives, we live. And since He ever  
lives to make intercession for us, our eternal life is sure. But, oh, we must  
have this life! Except a man eat My flesh, says He, and drink My blood,   
there is no life in him, as if there could not be spiritual life till Christ  
Himself were there, and Christ not there without becoming life to our   
souls.   
II. I now turn very briefly to our second point. The text tells us we are   
ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.   
To be brief and yet explicit, let me notice that I think the acceptance   
here meant, includes first of all, justification before God. We stand on trial.  
When we stand in Christ we are acquittedwhile standing in ourselves   
the only verdict must be condemnation. The term acceptance, in the   
Greek, means more than that. It signifies that we are the objects of Divine   
complacency. When God looked upon the world of old, He said it was very   
goodand when the Lord looks upon His people in Christ, He says the  
same. But, methinks if there could be anything better than very good, He would say His people in Christ were better than the work of His own hands, since they wear not a created righteousness, but the righteousness   
of the Creator, Jesus Christ Himself.   
They are, then, accepted by His justice, and they are viewed with complacency by His holiness. But this is not all. When it is written, Accepted   
in the Beloved, it means that those accepted are the objects of the Divine   
delight. Friends, whenever I get to this thought, (and many a time in this   
House of Prayer I have got to it), I always feel inclined to sit down and let   
you think it over, for it is such an extravaganza of Divine Grace that we  
worms, mortals, sinnersshould be the objects of Divine love! When   
princes wed with beggars the world marvels. But when God sets His affections upon sinful men and women in Christ, oh, this is the wonder of   
wonders! Even the angels might desire to look into it!   
I do believe that when we have been in Heaven ten thousand years, this   
will still be a subject of rapture and surprisethat ever He should have   
found anything in us in which He could take delight! To pity us, to show   
mercy to usthat I can understand. But to love us! The big heart of God   
to love a creeping thing like man! The infinite soul of the Most High to   
pour itself out on such a mean, worthless creature as man! The everlasting God who fills all in allto concentrate as it were, the powers of His   
Spirit and set the whole upon a creature that His own hands have made  
a creature that had revolted and rebelled and at the best is worthless still!   
Oh, sing of this, you spirits before the Throne! We cannot speak of it today  
as we would.   
All this is, in the Beloved. We are not accepted any way else but, in  
the Beloved. Let me show you that this is the best way in the world to he   
accepted. Each of us knows it is the only way. But even if there were another, it is the best way. Suppose we could be accepted in ourselves.  
Adam was, while he was obedienthe was accepted in his own works.  
Yes, but how soon he fell! And then his acceptance fell, too. He stood on  
his own feet, and therefore he soon fell to the ground. Suppose you and I   
had kept the Law up till now. I think I hear you say, Oh, I wish I had! I   
wish I could come before God as a perfectly righteous man. O Soul! You   
would not be half so safe as you are now in Christ.   
But if I had no sin, yet I would ask that I might be in Christfor I  
might have sin some dayand then down would go the goodly structure!  
That which is built upon a fallible creature is built upon the sand. And if  
the structure had up to now been without one rotten timber, yet, since the   
basis is the will of manand that might changedamnation might   
shortly overtake us. After all, we had done better, surely, to stand in   
Christ, who cannot fall.   
Now, I know some professors who seem to me to stand in their own experience, to be accepted in their own experience. At least that is their apprehension. Just now they had such visits from Christs faith, such  
gleams of His love. And now they think God accepts them, for they feel so   
high, so heavenly-minded, so drawn above the earth! I have seen these   
same persons the next day feel their souls cleave to the earth and they  
have said, Now, I am not accepted. O that these Beloved Ones would but  
know that God never did accept them in their experienceHe accepted   
them in Christ. And He never can reject them till He rejects them in  
Christ, which cannot be, since He cannot reject Christ.   
I would that they would see that their ups make them no higher before God, and their downs make them no lowerthat all their high joys do not exalt them, and all their low despondencies do not really depress them in their Fathers sight. They stand accepted in One who never alters, in One who is always the Beloved of God, always perfect, always complete, always without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Blessed faith, that walks above experience! Joyous trust that in the dark nights still sings of Heavens unclouded noon, and in the midst of blackness and vileness consciously felt, still boasts of pardon bought with blood, of righteousness   
complete, and without flaw!   
The Arminians say our being accepted before God, if I understand it   
correctly, is also an acceptance in our graces. This is the English of their   
doctrine of falling awaywhile a man walks worthily, God accepts him. If   
he walks sinfully, then God accepts him no more. Those of you who like   
this way of being accepted, may choose it. For my part, I feel there is   
nothing can ever satisfy the craving of my spirit but an acceptance which   
lies utterly and wholly out of me and only and entirely in Christ Jesus.   
Why, Brethren, we would be accepted one day and rejected the next! No,  
morewe might be accepted one minute and rejected the next! If it lay in   
anything whatever in our walk, or in our work, we should be in the Covenant and out of the Covenant fifty times a day.   
But I suppose the Arminians have a difference between sin and sin.  
Surely, they must have the old Romish distinction between venial and   
mortal sin. For if sin puts a man out of Christ, I wonder when he is in  
since we are sinning day by day. Perhaps there is a certain quantity of sin  
required to do it. Then that is only the old Romish dogma revived. Some   
sins, mortal on the Arminian theory, so as to put a man out of Divine  
Grace, and other sins venial, so that they can keep in Grace and sin, too. I   
glory in my God that I know *Once in Christ in Christ forever,   
Nothing from His love can sever.*

If my good works had put me into Christ, then my bad works might turn me out of Him. But since He put me in when I was a sinner, vile and worthlessHe will never take me out, though I am a sinner vile and

worthless still *Unchangeable His will,   
Though dark may be my frame;   
His loving, heart is still   
Eternally the same   
My soul through many changes goes,   
His love no variation knows.*

Now, Christian, I want you this morning, to rejoice in thisyou are accepted in the Beloved. You look within and you say, There is nothing acceptable here! Man, look at Christ, and see if there is not

everything acceptable there. Your frame depresses you, but look to Jesus, and hear Him cry, It is finished! Will not that death-note reassure you? Your sins trouble you. But remember they were laid upon the Scapegoats head of old and they no more exist, for He has cast your sins behind His back and thrown them into the depths of the sea

*In your Surety you are free! His dear blood was shed for you! With your Saviors garments on, holy as the Holy One.*

While you have still to bear groans and doubts and fears, to fight with corruption, and to wrestle with temptation, you are still accepted in the Beloved.

You are never accepted in yourselfyou are but a condemned sinner in yourself. You are never anything but accursed both of God and of the Law out of Jesus. But in Christ never accursed, in Christ never condemned, for he that believes in Him is not condemned, and he that believes not is condemned already, because He believes not on the Son of God. Accepted in the Beloved! This sentence seems to me to be such a mouthful. It is a dainty all your own. Let it lie in your mouth like a wafer made with honey. Accepted in the Beloved!

How I pity you who cannot say this. How I rejoice with you who can! You have troubles, you saywhat are your troubles? You are accepted in the Beloved. You tell me you have to fight with flesh and bloodwhat of it?so long as you are accepted in the Beloved? But you are so poor, you say, and you have to go home to a miserable meal todaybut then, how rich you areyou are accepted in the Beloved! The devil is tempting you never mind, he cannot destroy you, for you are accepted in the Beloved. Even the glorified souls are no more accepted than we are. They are only accepted in Heaven in the Beloved, but so are we!

I have often thought that if the children of God could fall from Grace on earth, they could certainly fall from Glory in Heaven. What is there that keeps them holy in Heaven? Is it their own will? If so, the heavenly saints may become hellish fiends. Brethren, it is Christ that keeps them. They are in Christ, therefore they cannot fallso are we in Christtherefore shall we never fail nor fall away but unto the end shall we endure.

III. Now, one minute upon the last point. That is, DIVINE OPERATIONS. He has made us accepted in the Beloved.   
Do not you see, Beloved, the whole way through, it is all of God and not of man? It was Christ who at first put us in His heart to be accepted there. It was the Father who put us in His Book according to the good pleasure of His own will to be accepted there. It was Christ that took us into His hands, according to His suretyship engagement, that we might be accepted there. It is Christ that took us into His loins, begetting us again unto a lively hope that we might be accepted there. And it is Grace that has united us in the Person of Christ that we may stand accepted there. You see, it is all of God from first to last. Jonah learned sound Divinity when he went into the whales belly, for he said, Salvation is of the Lord. And before the Throne of God in Heaven they always sing sound theology, for a part of the song is, Salvation unto God and unto the Lamb. Not of man, neither by mannot of the will of man, nor blood, nor birth. But according to the counsel of Him that works all things according to the good pleasure of His will.   
Sinner! Does that suit you? You that are not in Christ in your own experience, does that suit you? It ought to do so. If you had to put yourself into Christ, you could not do it. Men and women, if God asked anything of you to qualify you for Christ, you could not do it. But He asks nothing of you whatever. His mercy comes to you, not when you have made yourselves alive, but while you are yet dead. It comes to you, not merely when you seek it, but it first seeks you and then makes you seek it *No sinner can be beforehand with You   
Your Grace is most sovereign, most rich and most free.*

This is the good point about it, that it is most free. And this is the Gospel I am sent to preach to you this morningHe that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life.

Sinner, if you trust in Christ this morning, that act of faith shall be a point of union between you and Christ, and you shall be in Him vitally. Trust Christ, then, Soul. Well, you say, I have nothing. I have no reason to be satisfied, for I have no good works. But here evidently is a plan of salvation that does not want anything from me. I accept it. Say in your heart this morning, If the Lord had asked any doings, or willings, or feelings of me in order that I might be in Christ, such a lost soul as I am, I could do none of these things. But when He tells me to believe in Christ, my soul perceives that He is able to save, and I know Christ is willing, and therefore I will trust Him this day.

Soul, if you have done this, you are in Christ, you are accepted in the Beloved this morning. There may be a man that came in here a drunkard or a thief, that may yet go out of this place accepted in the Beloved. There may have come in here a woman of evil name, but if she believes in Christ, she shall go out accepted in the Beloved. She came in here in her own conscience condemned, she shall go out justified if she believes in Christ. If you can see Christ die and trust Him, and if you can see Christ risen and trust Himif you can see Him pleading and can trust Him then you are one with Him.

God has made you accepted in the Beloved. Oh, precious salvation that comes all the way to where you are! Let you be where you may, so long as you are not in torments and not in Hell, this salvation comes to your door. God give you Grace to lay hold of it now, or rather that it may lay hold of youand   
then you may say

*I do believe, I will believe   
That Jesus died for me,   
That on the Cross He shed His blood   
From sin to set me free.*

And if you believe in Him, by His Grace, your eternal life is sure, because you are one in Him, and, accepted in the Beloved.   
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DEI GRATIA   
NO. 958

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

To the praise of the glory of His Grace.   
Ephesians 1:6.

NO Truth of God is more plainly taught in Gods Word than this, that the salvation of sinners is entirely owing to the Grace of God. If there is anything clear at all in Scripture, it is plainly there declared that men are lost by their own works but saved through the free favor of God. Their ruin is justly merited, but their salvation is always the result of the unmerited mercy of God. In varied forms of expression, but with constant clearness and positiveness, this Truth is over and over again declared. Yet, plain as this Truth is, and influencing as it should be in every part of our doctrinal belief, it is frequently forgotten.

Many of the heresies which divide the Christian Church, spring from a confusion upon this point. Were that word Grace but fully read, marked, and learned, the great evangelical system would be far more firmly held, and plainly preached. But forgetfulness that by Grace you are saved, is a common fault among all conditions of men. Sinners forget it, and they seek salvation by the works of the Law. They refuse to surrender to the Sovereign Grace of God, and entrench themselves behind the tottering fence of their own righteousness.

And saints forget this, too, and therefore their minds become dark, their spirits fall into legal bondage, and where they ought to rejoice in the Lord unceasingly, they become despondent and full of unbelieving dread. Brethren, I am incessantly preaching here the Doctrines of Grace, they are growingly dear to meand as often as I preach them, I trust they are not wearisome to you. And if they should be, that sad fact would not induce me to be silent upon them, but rather urge me to proclaim them more frequently and fervently! Your weariness of them would be a clear proof that you required to hear them yet again, and again, and again, until your souls were brought to delight in them.

There is no music out of Heaven equal to the sound of that word Grace, save only the celestial melody of the name of Jesus. One of the early fathers was called the angelic doctorsurely he is most angelic who preaches most of Grace. Grace among the attributes is the Chrysostom, it has a golden mouth. It is the Barnabas, for it is full of consolation. It is the Boanerges, for it thunders against self-righteousness. It is mans star of hope, the wellspring of his eternal life, the seed of his future bliss.

I. We shall draw from the text our first observationIN SALVATION AS A WHOLE WE SEE THE GLORY OF GODS GRACE. So the Apostle tells us, To the praise of the glory of His Grace. Every attribute of God has its own appropriate opportunity for displaying itself. To each quality of the Divine Nature there is a glory, and the Lord takes care that there shall be a time when this glory shall be so seen as to become the subject of praise

to intelligent creatures.

There is great glory in His power, and long ago He who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, made the heavens and the earth. It was a great triumph of power, and other grand attributes combined to make the display still more glorious. Wisdom was there to balance the clouds. Prudence set a compass upon the face of the deep. Truth appointed the times and the seasons, and Goodness arranged the habitable parts of the earth for the living creatures and for the sons of men.

All the attributes of God were exercised, but power was greatly magnified, the power which by a word created, and by its mere will made all things to stand forth. On that occasion, when the glory of Gods power was revealed, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. They saw the glory of the Divine power, and rendered their joyful homage. On that august occasion many of Gods attributes were extolled, but there was no room for the praise of the glory of His Grace.

Grace found no objects in a pure creation upon which to display its full glory. There was room for kindness, benevolence, favor, goodness, and lovebut Divine Grace in its true and deepest meaning needs undeserving creatures to operate upon, sinful creatures that may be pardoned, fallen creatures that may be restored, justifiedand there were none such condemned creatures that may be in the creation as it came from the Divine hand.

Further on, the Lord took occasion to give a display of the glory of His Justice. We know not precisely when or how, for the record is not full and clear. But we have the outlinesthere was once a great rebellion in Heaven. Certain of those bright intelligences known to us as angels, for some reason or other, revolted from the Divine government under the leadership of that bright son of the morning, who is now forever called the Prince of Darkness.

There was war in Heaven against the rule of the Eternal. Then flew forth the thunderbolts of Jehovahs strength, and the rebels were subdued at once by His irresistible might. Then His Justice flamed forth in splendor, for we read of the pit that was dug for the wicked, and of everlasting fire in Hell prepared for the devil and his angels. Hurled from the battlements of Heaven, they fell into the deeps of perdition. Driven from the throne of their glory, they became hopeless wanderers throughout the realms of misery.

The praise of the glory of Divine Justice may be read in these terrible lines, And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day. Divine Justice shall yet further be displayed in that tremendous day when the Great White Throne shall be set, and all nations shall be gathered before it, and the unjust shall receive the vengeance due for their rebellion against the majesty of God.

Glorious shall be the attribute of Justice, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

In all this we see no revelation of the glory of His Grace. To fallen angels He dealt out Justice. Upon them Holiness shot forth her consuming fire, but no word of Mercy was heard, no hope of restoration was given. The Mediator took not up the angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. So, too, in the last dread assize, Justice, not Mercy, shall rule the hour. He shall render unto every man according to his works. Still, there must be an opportunity to glorify the attribute of Grace. Whenever we can clearly perceive that an attribute exists in God, we may fairly infer that there will be something for that attribute to exercise itself upon.

It is always a hopeful circumstance that there is mercy in God, and that this mercy endures forever. For it seems to be inevitable that mercy should be exercised, and therefore when we see sin in the world we expect to see mercy displaying its power. Yonder I see in the surgeons dispensary a potent remedy, and it suggests to me that a certain disease falls under his eyes, and when it is raging I naturally look to see the remedy much in use. When you read of Grace in the heart of God, of pity, of free favor, of Sovereign Mercy, it is clearly implied that there would be guilty ones upon whom that free favor would in due time be bestowed.

Accordingly, we find that God has selected the salvation of the sons of men as the platform for the exhibition of His Gracethat in His elect His Grace may show forth its glory, just as in other events the glory of His power or of His Justice has been shown. I want you to note that a display of the glory of any attribute is not a more proof that such an attribute existsbut an unusual revealing and magnifying of that attributeso that it excites the attention and wonder of all beholders.

Let me go back again to a display of power and remind you of a memorable event in the history of this world during our own historical period. We read of Pharaoh, For this purpose have I raised you up, that I might show forth My power in you. Pharaoh, a man of a peculiarly determined disposition, of a high and haughty spiritresolved to resist the commands of Jehovah and to hold Israel in bondage. Jehovah ordained to reveal in him what His power could do. After first having warned him by his servants, Moses and Aaron, who worked great wonders in his presence, the Lord began to deal with the haughty king.

He turned the waters of Egypt into blood, and slew their fish. The land brought forth frogs in abundance in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came many sorts of flies, and lice in all their borders. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also, and their fig trees. And broke the trees of their coasts. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, and did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. The kings heart was cowed for awhile, but in desperate obstinacy he hardened his heart yet more, put on a brazen forehead and again said, Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? I will not let His people go. Volley after volley the artillery of Heaven was discharged upon him. The Lord mighty in battle gave His enemy no respite. One by one He brought up His reserves, and fitted fresh arrows upon His bow. The lordly monarch found himself stunned with the repeated blows, and bewildered by the terrors of his Omnipotent Adversary.

At last the masterstroke was given which brought the tyrant to his knees. The angel of destruction was sent to smite all the first-born of Egypt. And an exceeding great and bitter cry went up from every household in that dread nightfor all the first-born were slain, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat upon the throne, to the first-born of the woman servant behind the mill. Then it was that the astonished monarch rose up in the night and said to Moses and Aaron, Rise up, and get you forth from my people, and go serve the Lord as you have said.

Yet, before long, Pharaoh hardened his heart again, and pursued after the Israelites with horses and with chariots. You know the story, but we will rehearse it yet again, for great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and His mighty acts which were of old are to be had in perpetual remembrance. Even in Heaven they shall sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb. Let us, then, rehearse it here below.

You remember how Pharaoh in his pride pursued the children of Israel, saving, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. In his high presumption he dared to follow the chosen of the Lord into the heart of the sea. Then the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.

But in vain they turned themselves to flee, for in a moment when Moses stretched forth his rod, the waters, at the command of God, returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the hosts of Pharaoh. They sank like lead in the mighty waters, the depths covered them, there was not one of them left. Then was seen the glory of Jehovahs power, and then was heard the praise of that glory, for Miriam took her timbrel, and went forth in the dance, while the daughters of Israel followed her. And all the hosts of Israel took up the refrain of her song, Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider has He thrown into the sea. Then was made known the praise of the glory of Jehovahs power.

Now, Brethren, in the work of the salvation of man you have a parallel case, for one attribute is not more glorious than another. The praise of the glory of His Grace in rescuing man from the deep ruin into which he had fallen, in giving the Well-Beloved to bleed and die, in routing sin, death, and Hellin leading our captivity captive, in uplifting us into Heaven, and giving us to be partakers of His glory through the merit of Jesus Christ our Lordin all this, I say, Grace is as glorious as was power at the Red Sea. No stinted thing, then. No small matter, no subject to be whispered of, or described with bated breathbut something great and grand and glorious will that work of salvation bewhich is to the praise of the glory of so great and favorite an attribute as the Grace of God!

I have tried, if I could, to think of what Grace at its utmost must be. But who by searching can find out God? It is not possible for the human mind to conceive of power at its utmost. Pharaohs overthrow gives you but a guess at what the Omnipotence of the Lord can accomplish. It can shake all worlds to dust, dissolve the universe, and annihilate creation. Power at its utmost, who shall compass it? And Grace, my Brethren, Grace at its utmost! I was about to say you see it in the Lord Jesus. And shall I err if I so speak? For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.

But, my Brethren, our minds cannot see the utmost power of Grace human intellect is not gigantic enough to grasp it allbut believe me, if anywhere the full praise of the glory of Gods Grace is seen, it is beheld in the salvation of the chosen sons of men. When all the chosen ones shall be gathered together, and the Church of God in Heaven shall be perfect, not one living stone lacking of the entire fabricthen across that edifice shall this inscription be written in letters of light, To the praise of the glory of His Grace.

The work of salvation from first to last, as a whole, was devised and carried out and shall be perfected to the praise of the glory of the Grace of God. Thus much upon the first head. Salvation is of the Lord, and in it Grace reigns without a rival!

II. Secondly, THIS IS TRUE OF EACH DETAIL OF SALVATION. I gather that from the position of my text. The fifth verse speaks of predestination and adoption, and the sixth verse speaks of acceptance in the Beloved. The position of my text puts all three of these under the same markthey are all to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Brethren, the sea is salt as a whole, and every drop of it is salt in its degreeif the whole work of salvation is of Grace, every detail of that work is equally of Grace.

The rays of the sun as a whole possess certain properties. Analyze one single sunbeam and you shall find all those properties there. I have just now said that the whole of salvation might be resembled to a great temple, and that across its front would be written, To the praise of the glory of His Grace. Now some of the ancient Eastern buildings were erected by certain monarchs and were dedicated to them. Not only was the whole pile set up to their honor, but each separate brick was stamped with the royal cartouche or coat of arms. Not only the whole structure, but each separate brick bore the impress of the builder.

So is it in the matter of salvationthe whole is of Grace, and each particular portion of it equally manifests in its measure the free favor of God. Let me begin at the beginning, and very briefly rehearse the different steps of the salvation of a sinner. There was, first of all, the election of men by God before all time. He it was who chose unto Himself a people to show forth His praise. That choice was not made in any degree on account of any debt due to man, on account of any merit that existed in men or was foreseen to exist. It was the result of free favor on Gods part that any were chosen to become His sons and daughters.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight, is the Saviors answer to the question why God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. If any man is chosen, it is not because of a natural worthiness or claim to preferenceor any essential excellence in him which demanded that God should make the choice. We were heirs of wrath even as others. No works were taken into account whatever. The Divine choice, according to Paul in the ninth of Romans was, not of works, but of Him that calls. It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.

This is clearer still, perhaps, when we come to the next step, namely, that of redemption. Christ has redeemed His people from the curse of the Law, having been made a curse for them. Can any man see the Son of God expiring upon Calvary, bearing the sins of man, and say that those for whom He died were worthy that Christ should die for them? It is downright blasphemy to connect any idea of merit with a gift so vast and free as the gift of Jesus Christ to redeem us from our sins! Why, Sirs, had we, every one of us, been perfect, and had we kept Gods Laws without omission, even as seraphs do in Heaven, we should still have only done what was our duty to have done.

There could have been no merit about our service which could deserve that Christ should die for us. Should the Eternal God ever be thought to be such a debtor to His creatures that He must veil His splendor in human form and be despised and rejected and spit upon? Shall it be said that the Son of God owes to man that He should bleed and die for them? I shudder while I raise the question or suggest the thought! It must be pure, spontaneous, disinterested mercy that nailed the Savior to the tree. Nothing could have brought Him from the Throne of Glory to the Cross of woe but Grace, unalloyed, unbounded Grace.

And when I turn onwards from redemption to the next step, namely, that of our effectual calling, it is the same. God is pleased to call many of us by the Word of the Gospel, and every Gospel call is a gracious thing, for we do not deserve to be called away from our sins. If we reject those calls, and resist themand yet, after all, the effectual Grace of God comes in a more powerful way and makes the unwilling willing and corrects the obstinacy of our heartswhy, this must be Grace emphatically!

The common call of the Gospel to every sinner to come to Christ, and to believe in Him and livewhich call is given in the Gospel every dayis Grace. But to continue that call, and to make it effectual, even to those who have up to now resisted it, why, this is Grace upon Grace, superabounding Grace! If you spread a table for the hungry, that is a favor to them. If you invite them to come, and invite again and again, it is great favor. But if you compel them to come in, as the parable has it, and bid them sit there and lay yourself out until you have won their hearts and persuaded them to accept your bountythis is mercy upon mercy! Yet such is effectual calling. That ever the love of God should have constrained you and me to come and be saved when we so long stood out against itoh, this is to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

My dear Brethren, take the next step from effectual calling to pardon and justification. I think it is not necessary that I should say that the pardon of sin must always be the effect of Grace. That statement is selfevident. It cannot be due to any man that he should have his sins pardoned, for sin that deserves a pardon is no sin. It cannot be due to any man that God should make him righteous, he being himself unrighteous. That must be a spontaneous action on Gods part, flowing from His pure bounty and love. No man can claim forgiveness, it were sacrilege to suggest that he could.

Pardon and justification, then, must be freely given us by Gods Grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Mark you well that the next series of steps which we call sanctification, or perseverance, or better still, gracious conservationall of those must be of Grace, too. No man has any claim upon God to keep him from going into sin. I am bound to keep from sinit is my dutybut for God to send me Grace by which I am enabled to keep from sin, is no right of mine.

It must be His free love that does it. And if from day to day He is pleased to direct my waywardness and bring my wandering spirit back. If after a thousand slips He still restores my soul and establishes my goings, I dare not praise myself for itI must gratefully put the crown of my perseverance in righteousness upon the head of that Infinite Grace which has worked all my works in me.

Beloved, if you will, at your leisure, survey all the steps of the work of Grace, you will be persuaded that you could not say of one more than another, This is of Divine Grace, but you would have to confess it equally of all. There is no point in the Christians life where his own merit avails him, no period where his own strength comes to the rescue of Divine power. It must be Grace that makes the dead soul liveand it is equally Grace which keeps the living soul alive. It must be Grace that washes the sin-blackened soul and makes it white as snow. And it must be equally Grace which keeps that soul from going back to its former filthiness. From foundation to pinnacle the temple of our salvation is all of Grace.

Certain skeptical philosophers have half conceded that there may have been an exhibition of Divine strength in the beginning, when the great orbs of Heaven were first caused to revolve. But then they affect to question whether any fresh power is put forth to preserve the stars in their courses. You and I know that no forces of the past will suffice for the present demand, and we believe that Divine power is always streaming forth to urge on the wheels of the universe.

It is even so in the little world within us. It was Grace that set our hearts moving towards Christ and holiness. It is equally Grace that keeps us still following after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. As the waters cover the channels of the sea, so does Grace cover all our salvation. In every jot and every tittle of our heavenly charter, Grace guided the pen. From first to last salvation is free. For by Grace, are you saved through faith. And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

III. Now, Brethren, in the third place, having shown that salvation is of Grace as a whole and of Grace in all its details, I shall notice that THE PECULIAR GLORIES OF THIS GRACE OUGHT TO BE POINTED OUT, and to be considered by us.

What are the peculiar glories of Divine Grace? This is not a fashionable doctrine, but we will speak it plainly and honestly. In the first place, it is a peculiar glory of Grace that it is Sovereign, that the favor of God is given to man according to the absolute will of the Almighty God, and for no reason known to us but the good pleasure of His will. When a man gives away anything in kindness to the poor, he likes to exercise his own sovereignty in the gift, but no man is so absolutely a possessor of the good things of this life as to have a right to the exercise of an altogether absolute sovereignty over his goods.

There must be some limit to human rights. A man, even in his free gifts, ought not to give to some, and he ought in preference to give to others. But the great and gracious God has no limits to His absolute will. There are no rights remaining to fallen man before God, except the right to suffer the infliction of justice. Man has so forfeited all claims upon God that on the ground of right he can receive nothing but eternal wrath nothing whatever. Nor does any claim or pretense of claim in any degree influence the determination of the Most High in the gift of His Grace. Over the heads of all men He speaks with thundering voice, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Absolute Sovereignty is one of the glories of Divine Grace.

Another glory of this Grace is its entire freeness. Man is not expected to do anything to earn or obtain the Grace of God. He would not if he were expected. He could not if he were required. He has so utterly departed from God that he has lost the favor of Godto lose it was in his powerto gain it again is not. Nor does God bestow His favor on any man because of anything He sees in the man. Neither his wealth, nor his fame, nor his position, nor his character. He looks down on man and passes by kings and princes to let his love settle on the poor.

He looks on men, and often selects the grossest transgressor and the chief of sinners, that these should become eternal monuments of His power to save them. This He does, and continues still to do most freely, spontaneously, because so it seems good in His sight. Another glory of His Grace is its fullness. Where God bestows His Grace, it is no little Grace. It is Grace to cover all the mans sins, whatever they may be. Though they may be so multiplied that he cannot count them, and so gross that he cannot estimate them, yet the Grace of God makes a clean sweep of them all.

I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. Blasphemy is expressly mentioned as a violent form of evil and direct attack upon God. The most heinous forms of human iniquity the Grace of God blots out of the Book of Remembrance, and He takes those who committed those heinous sins, changes their nature, makes them His children, and receives them, at last, into His Gloryand all because of the free favor which is in His heart towards them.

Another glory of this Grace is its unfailing continuance. Where once the Grace of God has fallen, it is never taken away. If God, in His mercy, visits a man with Grace, He never afterwards revokes the pardon He gives, or recalls the favor He has bestowed. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Grace is no intermittent brook flowing today and dried up tomorrow, no fleeting meteor dazzling all beholders and then vanishing

in thick darkness *Whom once He loves he never leaves,   
But loves them to the end.*   
His Grace is unchanging, His mercy endures forever.   
Another glory of it is that it is unalloyed and unmingled. Gods Grace in  
saving souls rules alone. Human merit does not intrude here and there to   
make a patchwork of the whole. Grace triumphant can say, I have trod   
the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me. Grace is   
Alpha. Grace is Omega. It is Graces glory that no mortal finger touches   
her work, and no human hammer is lifted up thereon. This is what men   
cannot bear. They will have it that man must have some merit, must do  
some little. But it must not be. The Grace of God demands a clear stage. It   
saves and it, alone, from first to last.   
Need I add that it is one glory of this Grace that while it thus reveals itself so fully, it never interferes with any other attribute of God? Interfere,   
did I say? It only tends to illustrate all the other glories of the Divine   
Character. God is absolute in His favor, but He is never unjust. He gives   
justice to all. He allots to each one his portion due. What? You say, is   
He just to those whom He favors? Does He not pass by their sins? I answer, Yes, but I also say, No. He does pass by their sins so far as they  
are concerned, but He does so justly. For He first laid their sins upon their   
Surety, and exacted from Christ the vengeance due for their transgressions.   
He is as just towards His saints as if He had no mercy upon them, for   
in their Substitute His Justice has received the full payment of His demands. There is no attribute of God that Grace ever slights. It is on the   
best terms with Gods Truth, though Truth said, I will by no means spare   
the guilty. God has not spared the guilty, for He laid the guilt on Christ   
and did not spare Him. And now His people are not guiltythey are absolved, there is no condemnation to them, their transgression is forgiven  
their sin is covered.   
I say, again, this is the glory of Graceone of its special crowns and   
adornmentsthat though it has its way and works as freely as if Justice   
were dead, and holiness were withered, yet it never does invade the realm   
of any one of those bright attributes. God is as just, and as holy as if He   
were not gracious, and yet His Infinite Sovereignty sways its undisputed   
scepter in the realm of salvation.  
IV. I have brought you thus far, into the very heart of the text, and   
now, in the fourth place, THIS GRACE OUGHT TO BE THE SUBJECT OF  
PRAISE. It is to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Here needs a tongue   
far more fluent than mine. Or rather, here is wanted no tongue but a   
warm heart and grateful thought to sit down and contemplate. As many of you as have been bought with blood and washed in it. As   
many of you as have been taken from among men and made to be the   
Lords own peculiar people, I ask you now, in silence, to praise God while   
your mind surveys the whole plan of your salvation. Chosen before the   
earth wasGrace, free Grace! Given into the hands of Christ to be His treasureall of Grace! Redeemed with the hearts blood of Immanuel, all out of His free favor to you!   
Preserved when you were running into sin, slaves of Satan, mad on your idolspreserved in Christ Jesus by long-suffering Grace! Called with that voice which wakes the dead, and endowed with spiritual life altogether of Grace! Adopted into the Divine family, made partakers of the Divine Nature because Grace so willed itwhat wonders are here! Brothers and Sisters, in your case it was Grace of the most eminent degree. If you do not say so of your case, I must say so of mine.   
Above all the sons of men I humbly claim to be most indebted to the Grace of God. But I doubt not, my Brothers and Sisters, you also claim the same. There were specialties about our character, there were peculiarities about our sin, there were difficulties about our constitution which all tended to make it very remarkable that we should be the subjects of the Divine Love. Each one of us can say, What was there in me that could merit esteem, or give the Creator delight? Now, you will glorify God if you let your soul in silence muse at the foot of the Throne of Grace, and worship Him of whose mercy you have so largely been made a recipient. When you have done this, may I ask you, in the next place, to let all men see the result of Grace in you! It has been a common slander against the Doctrine of Grace that it makes light of good works, and leads men to licentiousnessa slander which the lives of the people of God have amply answered in the past. Now you to whom this mercy has been shownby your watchfulness, your hatred of the very appearance of evil, your careful walking, your close fellowship with Christprove to those who ridicule us, by your lives, that Grace is a holy thing wherever bestowed, for it renews the heart and sanctifies the life.   
You are degrading the Grace of God when you are not walking as becomes the household of faith. You are honoring God better by holiness than by writing the sweetest poetry, or by uttering the most seraphic sentences upon it. Holy living is to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Add to your holy living your own personal testimony. I do not care to hear people who are converted talking much about what they were before conversion. I am not sure that the records of horrid lives of base men are ever profitable if they are written. Perhaps the best thing to say is, Of which things we are now ashamed.   
But at the same time tell it to others that the Grace of God has saved you. If you were, before conversion, given to great sins, be ashamed of them, but do tell that Grace has saved such as you are. Be bold to testify in all companies that the Grace of God is equal to all emergencies and can save the lost from going quite down into the jaws of perdition. Publish it everywhere that the mercy of God can blot out the grossest and vilest sinsthat no man need despairthat the great heart of God is large enough to receive the most devilish of sinners. Proclaim that he passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin for Jesus Christs sake. Let the angels know it! When you are introduced to Heaven, publish there what Gods Grace has doneand till you get there let men know it here belowto the praise of the glory of His Grace.   
V. And now, lastly, let me say that the doctrine which we have taught this morning, THE TRUTH WHICH WE HAVE TRIED FULLY TO PREACH, IS THE GREAT GROUND OF HOPE FOR SINNERS. For, in the first place, if it is so that salvation is all of the free favor of God, then here is hope for every man!   
You will enquire How? I will reply thus. Suppose there is here a man who has been guilty of some gross crime, yet others who have been guilty of the like crime have been pardoned, and have been the subjects of Divine Gracewhy should he not be? If salvation were by merit, such a man clearly would be shut out of hope, and rightly considered, every man would be. We have, none of us, a half-a-grain of merit if we were ransacked through and through. But if it is of Grace, why should not the Grace of God stick on me as well as on any other man?   
And if it is proved that the Grace of God is so Sovereign that it has often fallen on the very worst of men, why not on me, if I am the very worst of men? And if I find it written that him that comes to Christ He will in nowise cast out, then I, even if I am the worst of men, am encouraged to come to Christ. He has saved othersthe worst of men. He tells me if I come, if anyone comes, He will not cast him out. Then why should not I go? Why not, indeed?   
If there were anything like preparation, or readiness, or merit, or adaptation, then there would be no hope for me. But if it is a matter altogether of a pure, gratuitous giftthen why should it not be given to me as well as to another? It holds out a bright encouragement to every sinner, and it holds out hope even to the exceedingly gross transgressor because Grace is evidently magnified in changing the nature of great sinners. If I am a great transgressor and have desperately sinned, what room there will be for Grace to glorify itself in me! Here is hope for me. Why should I not go to God in prayer and ask to be made a trophy of His Grace?

And if any should say, But if we are not the grossest of sinners, then we seem to be shut out! I answer, No, but rather to be included, because if any will say, God saves the greatest of sinners, because they glorify His Grace most, I should reply, God is not actuated by any selfish motive. He does not save men that He may get anything by it, and you from whom He can derive nothing are the very people He is likely to save, to prove the utter freeness and disinterestedness of His love.   
Do not, for a moment, imagine we are going to put sin in the place of merit, and make it appear that the greatness of their sin is the reason why the Lord will save men! If there is no reason for Grace in human merit, much less is there in the degree of demerit. If you have never gone into gross sin, thank God for it, but for all that, you are sinner enough. If you see yourself as you are, you are filthy enough in all conscienceyou need not be any viler. And because your case does not, to you, appear as though you could glorify God, it is not, therefore, to be argued that it appears so to Him who sees not as man sees.   
When a surgeon meets with a case which apparently will bring no credit to him in vulgar eyes if he cures it, it is the highest honor to him that he was not deterred by the fear that it would bring him no honor. It is highly glorious to God that He is not affected by the praise of men. There is hope, then, for you who cannot be numbered with the grossest of transgressors. If all is of Grace then it neither shuts out big nor little. And while the gracious promises ring like a peal of silver bells, Come unto Me all you that labor, and that with a general and universal note to every sinner under Heaven, Whosoever believes in Him is not condemned, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved, and such like passages, why, we are greatly encouraged to come to Jesus!   
This doctrine that salvation is all of Grace, and not of us at all, is one of the very best reasons why I, though I do not feel right, nor act right, nor am right, but am just a lump of sin, a mass of filthiness, and nothing elseshould come as I am, even now, and put my trust in the blood and righteousness of Christ! And I, even I, can trust that I shall find acceptance in the Beloved. O that some hearts, today, may, by the Holy Spirit, be encouraged to come to Christ!   
If you have any goodness, this sermon is a death knell for you. If you have any merits, away with you, away with you! Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. If you are not sick, what are you doing here? The physician is come to heal the sick, not those who are in health. But if you have nothing that could deserve anything of God, then to you is the word of this salvation sent, To the praise of the glory of His Grace.   
My last word shall briefly indicate what is the privilege of each sinner who would rejoice in the Sovereign Grace of God. Often as we explain faith, we still need to explain it again. I met with an illustration taken from the American war. One had been trying to instruct a dying officer in what faith was. At last he caught the idea, and he said, I could not understand it before, but I see it now. It is just thisI surrender, I surrender to Jesus.   
That is it! You have been fighting against God, standing out against Him, trying to make terms more or less favorable to yourself. Now here you stand in the Presence of God, and you drop the sword of your rebellion and say, Lord, I surrender, I am Your prisoner. I trust to Your mercy  
to save me. I have done with self, I fall into Your arms.   
*A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,   
On Christs kind arms I fall.   
Be You my strength and righteousness,   
My Jesus and my all.*   
May God bless you. Amen.

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THE GLORIES OF FORGIVING GRACE   
NO. 1555

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 29, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.   
Ephesians 1:7.

LAST Sunday morning the subject was redemption, You are not your own: you are bought with a price. The sequel to redemption is pardon the text gives us that doctrine, for it tells us that redemption through the blood of Jesus involves the forgiveness of sins. Our subject, at this time, shall be the forgiveness of sin, the measure, mode, medium and manifestation of it as set forth in the words before us. May the Holy Spirit sweetly open up to us the glories of our sin-forgiving God and cause us to exult in the riches of His Grace.

Beloved Friends, no one can say that we have before us a theme which is unpractical, speculative and fanciful! No one will be able to charge the preacher with discoursing upon a subject with which his hearers have little or nothing to do, or wandering into barren fancies which cannot affect their actual lives. It is true that some sermons are barely human and might as well have been addressed to the inhabitants of Jupiter or Saturn as to ourselves, but such shall not be the case with our discourse. We have no hairlines of metaphysical subtlety before usour theme runs parallel with the beaten track of everyday life.

Sin is, alas, too familiar with us. We have all committed it; the slime of the serpent has been upon us; we are still affected by it. As an adder in the path, it bites at our heels and it will be our daily trial, like the fiery serpents in the wilderness, till we enter the promised rest. Sin, as a thing of the past, cannot be forgotten. Was there ever a more sore bondage than that with which made us serve it with rigor? Sin, as a matter of affliction for the present, is not to be ignoredwas there ever a sterner fight than we have to wage against evil outside and within? Sin, as a danger still ahead, must not be overlookedwere there ever rocks or quicksand more terrible to the mariner than temptations to sin which yet lie before us on our voyage to Heaven? Sin is always around us! Where shall we hasten to escape from its presence? If in holy communion we climb to Pisgahs top, we stumble even in view of Canaan and slip upon our high places! And if we descend into the lowest deeps, like David, till all Gods waves and billows have gone over us, our despondency and unbelief cause us to sin amid our humiliations! Should I take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the sea, unless I could escape from myself, even there would sin follow me and its hand would smite me to my sore wounding.

Nothing can be more practical than the doctrine which deals with sin and its removal and no news can be more pleasant than the tidings of remission! Why, the very sound of that word, Forgiveness of sins is a joy forever! No marriage bell has more music in its notes. To the guilty, forgiveness is a tone of joy which their jaded ears are able to hear without strain. It ministers refreshment to the weary heart. High joys and rare delights are apt to send forth raised notes which terrified consciences cannot enduretheir very sweetness is sharp and distressing to the sorrowfuland their harmony causes a deeper discord in the broken heart!

But forgiveness has a soft, silver sound, mellow and tender and when mans ears are stunned with the thunder and the terror of the wrath to come, then he is charmed to listen to its soothing melody. The gentle love whispers of Free Grace and dying love and pardons bought with blood are as Heavens own sonnets to troubled souls! It is my earnest desire, dear Friends, that many, this morning, may come to believe in the joyful doctrine of the forgiveness of sins! It is an article in the creed, but I want it to be a substantive in your lives. Most men say that they believe it, but their belief is often nominal and a nominal faith, like nominal wealth, only makes the absence of the reality the more deplorable.

In two instances there is clearly no faith in forgiven sin. The first is in the case of those who have never felt that they are sinful. How can he who does not believe in the existence of sin, believe in the forgiveness of it? His whole confession on that matter belongs to the region of fiction. If sin is not a terrible fact to you, pardon will never be more than a notion. A second class of persons who do not believe in forgiveness are those who know the guilt of sin but are not yet able to believe in the Lord Jesus for the remission of their transgressions. They need to be admonished as Luther was by the godly old monk. When he was greatly distressed under conviction of his guilt, the aged man said, Did you not say this morning in the creed, I believe in the forgiveness of sin?

Luther, like many more, had repeated those words, but had never grasped their meaning. Oh, my dear Hearers, do not be theoretical Believers! You believe in sin, believe, also in its pardon! Let the one be as much a Truth of God as the other. You believe in the punishment of sin in the case of the impenitent, be equally sure of the pardon of sin to Believers! You believe in the guilt of your own personal sin, believe, also, in the power of Jesus, at this moment, to blot out all your transgressions and, lo, they shall vanish as a cloud which is driven before the north wind! Forgiveness in Christ Jesus accepted by faith is now to be enjoyed and, with it, perfect rest and peace of heart. God grant it to you at this present momentthen shall my theme be marrow and fatness to you.

According to our text forgiveness of sins is a matter of Divine Grace and yet it is connected with the price paid by our Redeemer. We spoke last Sunday morning of a price being paid and here the text says, In whom we have redemption through His blood. But the fact of Christ having paid a price and having satisfied justice does not remove the pardon of sin out of the region of pure Grace. Because justice is satisfied we are not, therefore, to say that mercy is excluded. I cannot, at this time, go into the details to explain how the facts stand, but so it is according to the word of Revelation, that, albeit the salvation of a sinner is conducted upon principles which are as just as his condemnation, yet at the same time the forgiveness of a sinner is an act of gratuitous favor on the part of God.

As the giving of Jesus Christ, by whom justice is satisfied, was an act of free favor on the part of God, so the giving of the pardon which comes through Jesus Christ is, in the same manner, a matter of absolute Grace and by no means of debt or obligation. Do not, therefore, whenever you speak of our Lords satisfaction which He made to justice, think that justice has eclipsed mercy. Or, on the other hand, whenever you speak of the Grace of God in pardoning sin, do not imagine that mercy has blinded the eyes of justice, for it is a part of the Christian faith that in the death of Christ, justice shines out full-orbed like the sun at midday while mercy is glorified after a like fashion.

God is just and yet the Justifier of him that believes. Where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound! Justice is not forgotten, but Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Transgression, iniquity and sin are put away by the All-Merciful according to the riches of His Grace. Our text speaks of, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace, and from it we learn the measure of forgiveness, the manner of it and the manifestations of it. O for heavenly light while we view this grand Truth of God! Illuminate us, O Spirit of all Grace!

I. From the text we learn THE MEASURE OF FORGIVENESS. Hear this, you burdened souls, you self-condemned spirits, you that have shut yourselves out from hope of mercyhear me earnestly, I pray you, that your souls may live! It may be while I am speaking to you your minds will be quieted and you will find the key which will unlock every door in Doubting Castle and you will be set at liberty from Giant Despair! Observe, then, that the measure of forgiveness is the riches of Gods Grace and this statement leads us to observe that it is not the character or person of the offender which is the measure of mercy, but the Character of the offended One! Is there not rich consolation in this undoubted fact?

The pardon to be hoped for is not to be measured by you and what you are, but by God and what He is! In matters of offense and forgiveness, the rule almost always holds good that pardon becomes likely or unlikely, easy or difficult, not so much according to the offense as according to the character of the person offended. One man will forgive a grievous wrong while another will not overlook a wry word. Take an instance from English historyJohn had most villainously treated his brother, Richard, in his absence. Was it likely that when he of the lions heart came home, he would pass over his brothers grievous offense?

If you look at John, villain that he was, it was most unlikely that he should be forgiven. But then, if you consider the brave, high-souled Richard, the very flower of chivalry, you expect a generous deed. Base as John was, he was likely to be forgiven because Richard was so free of heart and, accordingly, pardon was right royally given by the great-hearted monarch. Had John been only half as guiltyif his brother Richard had been like he was, Richard would have made him lay his neck on the block. If John had been Richard and Richard had been John, no matter how small the offense, there would have been no likelihood of pardon at all! So is it in all matters of transgression and pardon. You must take the offense somewhat into account, it is true, but not one-half as much as the character of the person who has been offended.

Suppose I were asked, at this present time, to reconcile two persons who are at enmityif the one who evidently had been injured was one of certain Brethren around me whose forgiving spirits I have long relied upon, I should feel my task to be easywhatever the offense might have been. But I know some others about whom I would say, I dont know. I am afraid I shall not get on the right side of them. I shall have to approach them very carefully. However small the offense, it will be hard to remove their anger. I know certain persons of oldthey are quick-tempered and ready to be aggrieved for small reasons and they are slow in burning out, having fine memories for an affront. It is hard to get a forgiving word out of such sour spirits. You see, the nature of a pardon materially depends upon the character of the pardoner.

Let us establish this fact and then see what light it throws upon the probability of pardon to any of you who are seeking it. With whom are you dealing? You have offendedwho is He whom you have offended? Is it One whose anger is quickly awakened? No, the Lord is long-suffering and exceedingly patient. Forty years was He grieved with one generation and many a time did He pity them and remove His wrath from them. Is He one who is hard to satisfy and not easily persuaded to forgive? No, the choirs of the Temple of old chanted, as one of His sweetest praises, the oftrepeated words, His mercy endures forever. Again and again they answered one to another, His mercy endures forever.

If the pardon were to be according to your character, you would never be pardoned at all! If it were to be measured according to your offense, you would never be forgiven! But since the probability of pardon lies in the Character of God, then, O guilty one, self-condemned one, take heart and come to your Fathers feet and say, Father, forgive me, for I have sinned. Look into the face of God and see if He is not ready to forgive! Do you tell me that you dare not even think of the face of your offended God? Then I ask you to look into the face of Jesus Christ, for in His loving Countenance shines all the brightness of the Fathers Glory. Is it possible for you to look at the Lord Jesus and doubt His willingness to forgive? He whose eyes wept over a guilty city? He whose hands were weary with incessantly doing good to those who despised Him? He who gave His feet to the cruel nails for His adversaries and who, at last, poured out the life-floods of His heart for those that mocked Him? He must be willing to forgive! The measure of forgiveness, then, lies in the riches of Divine Grace and this may encourage the chief of sinners to expect mercy.

Again, since the forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of His Grace, then it is not according to our conceptions of Gods mercy, but according to that mercy, itself, and the riches of it. We conceive harsh things of God at times. We measure His corn with our bushel. We feel that He cannot pass by this and that crime, but that in certain points His Grace may be vanquished by human wickedness. Our ideas of Gods mercy are narrow and we think Him to be altogether such as we are! Listen, then My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, says the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Gods love is not to be measured by a mercers yard, nor His mercy to be weighed in the balances of the merchant! He has riches of Grace surpassing all the wealth which the imagination could ascribe to Him whose name is Love. When He gave His dear Son, His other Self, that He might bleed and die, He gave us proof that there was no penury of love in the coffers of His heart. He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? The measure of mercy, then, is not our conception of God, but God as He really isand who is he that can tell us how large is His love, how wide is His Grace, how high is His goodness, how deep is His favor?

I would have you come, poor Sinner, to God as to a deep abyss into which your sins can be cast and never heard of again! I would have you come to God in Christ as to One who is able, with a glance of His eyes, to make your sin dissolve like snow in the summers sun and vanish utterly, so that if it is searched for, it shall not be found! Yes, it shall not be, says the Lord. Is there not a fountain in this Truth of God overflowing with comfort to the most cast down oneto the one whose bleeding heart is smarting under the lash of an angry conscience? I think if I had heard this Truth of God plainly stated years ago I would not have remained so long in bondage, but I would have risen to my feet and have run to the Savior and have found peace at once.

If, again, the measure of mercy is, according to the riches of His Grace, then no limit to pardon can be set by the amount of human sin which can be forgiven. Sin is no trifle and yet pardon is no impossibility. Nobody can measure the greatness of the guilt of a single sinit is a world of iniquity. People talk of little sins, but there are no such things. The least rebellion against God is an intensely great evil. Yet there are degrees of sinning and one offense may be greater than another and one mans offenses may be far more rank and evil than those of his neighbors. If it is possible that one of my hearers has committed all the grosser sinshas heaped them up, has raked the kennels for them, has committed crimes in a way scarcely to be spoken of, has committed them again and again until the amount of his sins has become well-near incalculableyet this does not render his forgiveness impossible!

If there is one here who has gone to such an extreme of sin that he must set himself apart as being above all ordinary sinners, worthy of a special place in Hell, worthy of a red-hot bolt from the right hand of the avenging Godyet pardon may be granted him! Hear me, O my Friend! You have not gone beyond the power of God to pardon you, for the measure of His pardon is according to the riches of His Grace! And He does not say that He stops short here or there by reason of excessive vileness on the transgressors part. All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.

There a sin against the Holy Spirit which shall never be forgiven, but that is unpardonable only for this reasonthat where once it is committed the man never seeks forgiveness, nor desires itthat sin kills his conscience, for it is a sin which is unto death and the sinner, therefore, goes gaily down to destruction, never seeking forgiveness. If you seek mercy, be you who you may, you shall have it if you will believe in Christ Jesus! If all the sins of all mankind were heaped upon youif you sought mercy by confession of sin and faith in Christyou would not be denied, but your sin would be blotted out according to the riches of His Grace!

Another comfortable conclusion follows from thisno limit is set to the time in which a man has sinned so as to bind the reach of Grace by the lapse of years. Our text does not say that there is forgiveness of sins according to such-and-such a time of life, but according to the riches of His Grace. It is a blessed thing to come to God when you are young, a thing to sing of throughout the rest of your existence. Happy day when my young heart first leaped at the sound of the Saviors name! But oh, if gray hairs are covering your head and years have plowed their furrows on your brow, think not the forgiveness of sin to be impossible for you! Though your remaining days are so few that a little child may write them and the last of them will soon flicker away into darkness, yet if you will come and put your trust in Jesus, your transgressions shall vanish and your soul shall be even as a new-born child, for Christ makes all things new!

According to the riches of His Gracethis reaches the oldest man this brings hope of mercy to the most aged woman! I would to God I could speak familiarly with all unconverted persons who are getting into years and tell them not to stand back from Jesus through any fear that the past has sealed their doom, for there is forgiveness and plenteous redemption! The gate of mercy still stands wide open and if you are the oldest sinner that ever came to Christ, then you will be one of the special wonders of Heaven! You will be one that they will gaze upon with astonishment in Heaven and point you out with pleasure, saying, Here is the oldest sinner that was born again! I think you are more likely to be received than anybody, according to the riches of His Grace.

Let me draw another inference. If pardon is according to the riches of His Grace, then it is not according to the bitterness of the sorrow which has been felt by the sinner. There is a notion abroad that we must pass through a period of keen remorse before we can expect to be accepted by God. Yes, says one, I do not wonder that such a person was pardoned, since for years he was ready to destroy himself in his despair! He scarcely slept. He forgot to eat. He went about wringing his hands in agony. Beware of doting after this fashion! There must be sorrow for sin in every true Believer and there will bebut the best form of sorrow for sin generally follows forgiveness and does not precede it.

I never hated sin so much as when I knew that God had forgiven me! With all my soul do I sometimes sing to myself the choice lines of Mr. Monsell

*My sins, my sins, my Savior!   
How sad on You they fall,   
Seen through your gentle patience,   
I tenfold feel them all.   
I know they are forgiven,   
But still their pain to me   
Is all the grief and anguish   
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.   
My sins, my sins, my Savior!   
Their guilt I never knew   
Till, with You, in the desert   
I near Your passion drew.   
Till with You in the garden   
I heard Your pleading prayer,   
And saw the sweat drops bloody   
That told Your sorrow there.*

But, says one, I am so afraid that I can never be forgiven. You have no right to entertain such a fear, for that is making God a liar! But I dare not trust Christ. My Hearer, mind what you say on that score, for it is a tender point. You ought not to dare to doubt Christ and there is no daring in trusting Him. When God sets forth His dear Son to be a Propitiation for sin, it is not humility, it is wicked pride that makes anyone say, I dare not trust Him. Who are you to raise a question about trusting Jesus, the faithful and true? It is black presumption to refuse your confidence to God who cannot lie!

The Lord Himself bids you come and trust His Son! Do you refuse His command? Will you sooner perish than do the Lord Jesus the justice to trust Him? Ah, but surely, says one, I knew a person who was months and years in distress about his sin. I know such a person now. I know one who was five years an unbelieving seeker, but he was a fool for being so! There was no reason why he should have been in the dark so long, for the sun had risen! His eyes were blindfolded by his own folly. If he had believed in Jesus Christ right off, he might have had the forgiveness of sin at once. Half of that which is put down in biographies as the work of the Spirit is the work of the devil and the result of unbelief! John Bunyan gives a long story, in Grace Abounding, and I am thankful that he does, but he never meant that we were to imitate him in his unbelief and harsh thoughts of God!

Those hideous doubts and horrible fears were not the work of the Spirit of Godthey were the work of John Bunyans vivid imagination and the devil together! They had nothing to do with the pardon of his sin except that they hindered him from finding it month after month! Your business, poor guilty Sinner, is to believe that mercy is dealt out by God to sinners, not according to their despair and remorse, but according to the riches of His Grace! Where has God commanded us to despair? Does He not command us to believe? Where has He ever commanded remorse? Does He not bid us hope in His mercy? We are to come to Jesus just as we are and trust Him and we shall be forgiven all trespasses in a moment by our loving, waiting Father. He that believes in Him is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. He that believes in Him has everlasting life.

And so let me say that the measure of Gods forgiveness is not even the strength of a mans faith. The measure of Gods forgiveness is according to the riches of His Grace. You, dear Soul, are to come and trust in what Jesus Christ did when He bled away His life for sinnersand then your pardon shall be measured out to you, not according to the greatness and strength of your confidencebut according to the immeasurable mercy of the heart of God! You may have faith but as a grain of mustard seed. Your faith may only dare to touch the garments hem of the great Savior. You may get no further than to say, He has said, him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out, and I do come to Him. If I perish, I will perish trusting Him, and yet that faith will save you!

I would that your faith were stronger. I believe it will be so before long, but if it is only as the green blade which timidly springs up from the soil in the cold spring and is almost afraid of the biting windif there is but life in itif it lives alone upon Christ Jesus, it will suffice for salvation! Jesus says to the weak believer as well as to the strong saint, your faith has saved you; go in peace. Your sins which are many are all forgiven you if you believe in Jesus, for the measure of your forgiveness is not your faith, nor your tears of repentance, nor your bitter regrets, nor your sin, nor your conception of Gods goodness, nor your character, either past or present or future! No! It is the forgiveness which is granted from the Lord according to the riches of His Grace.

I feel half envious of men who can speak with the tongue of eloquence, for this theme deserves better speech than mine and yet, if I had the tongues of angels I could not set forth to you one half of the comfort which is to be found in this charming subject! My bare and unadorned style will not ever match the matchless beauty of the Grace which stands before you in its own native loveliness! The God of Heaven and earth who hates sin, nevertheless loves sinners! He has given His dear Son to die for them and upon their accepting His Son as their hope and trust He passes by their transgression, iniquity and sinnot according to the feeble measure of their conceptions, butaccording to the riches of His Grace.

Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men! Thanks be unto God for such amazing Grace!   
II. In the second place, I am going to spend a little time, as God may help me, in speaking upon THE MANNER OF FORGIVENESS. The manner of forgiveness is according to the riches of His Grace. Then I see in the mode and manner of forgiveness, first of all, absolute freeness, According to the riches of His free favor, for that is the meaning of the word, Grace. God forgives none because of payment made by them in any form. If we could bring Him mountains of gold and silver, they would be nothing to Himif we bring Him tears in rivers or alms in alps, or resolves, vows and promises in countless numbersall will amount to nothing as a bribe for Grace.   
Forgiveness, like love, is unpurchaseable by us. Gods pardons are absolutely free. He forgives because He chooses to forgive out of sheer pity to the sinner, out of clear, unmixed compassion, but with no adulteration of anything like bribe or price. Forgiveness is absolutely free! Then why should you not have it? Oh, you who have said, It will never come to mewhy not to you? Oh, you have said, I am not prepared. Why should it not come to you though you are unprepared? Isnt preparedness a sort of price? Since it comes freely, why not to you? But I have scarcely thought of it! I dropped in here this morning merely to spend an hour and why not spend that hour in singing of Free Grace and pardoning love? Why not let this be the first hour of your true lifethe hour in which you begin to live unto God? Pardon is absolutely freeWhoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. According to the riches of His Gracethis hints a royal ease!   
When you and I give away money to the poor, we have to pause and see how much is left in our purse. We have to calculate our incomes to see whether we may not be spending too much in charity. But those who have great riches can give and not calculate! Even so, God, when He grants forgiveness, gives it according to the riches of His Grace. He never has to think whether He will have Grace enough leftHe will be none the richer if He withholds it, none the poorer if He bestows it! There is a magnificent ease about the benefactions of GodHe scatters the largesse of His mercy right and left with unstinted liberality! The Roman conquerors, traversing the Via Sacra in triumph, were accustomed to scatter gold and silver with both hands as they rode along and the eager crowd gathered up the shower of gifts. Our Lord, when He ascended on high and led captivity captive, scattered gifts among men with royal splendor and munificence.

So does God pardon sinners as if it were everyday work with Him! His goodness flashes on all sides as water from a fountain in full play, or as light and heat from the noonday sun. You have not to extract forgiveness from a palm fast closedGod is more pleased to pardon than we are to be pardoned! When the prodigal son laid his head on his fathers bosom and his father kissed him, who had the more joy, do you thinkthe son or the father? I know the prodigals heart overflowed with gladness, but then the fathers heart was more capacious and when he said, This, my son, was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found, there was an incalculable depth of delight in the expression. It was the father who called for music and dancing, feasting and merrimentI fear the son was hardly so demonstrative in his delight.   
O poor weary Seekers, hear this inspired Word of God and be gladHe delights in mercy. Come home! Come home, poor wanderer! It is harder work to you to come home than for your Father to receive you. It is more trouble for you to ask for mercy than for God to give it to you! It is harder work for you to believe that He can save than it is for Him to do it. To Him mercy is pleasant work, the cunning art of His right hand which He can never forget. Oh, come and receive the mercy which the Lord gives lavishly, according to the wealth of His goodness! According to the riches of His Gracethat means unquestionable fullness. The man who is forgiven of the Lord is not half forgiven, but altogether absolved.   
There a theology which teaches that when a man believes in Jesus Christ he is pardoned up to a point, but in the future he may get into arrears again and if he does not see to it, he may again be accused and summoned before the Judgment Seat. This is not our theology. We believe in Him who said, I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. I believe that when Jesus Christ died for His people, He did not make Atonement for half their sins, but for all of them! And on that day when He said, It is finished, there was a virtual wiping out of all the sins of all His redeemed from the book of Gods remembrance. Hence His salvation is complete and those who have it are altogether delivered from the ruin which sin involves!   
If you come to Christ He will grant you deep, full, living, substantial pardon, such pardon as will put you among Gods childrensuch pardon that God will have no reckonings for past sins with you, no calling of you to account at some future timesuch pardon that you shall be as much accepted as if you had never sinned and God shall love you as though your whole life had been spent in His fear! The blood of Jesus makes us whiter than snow and absolute innocence cannot be more white than that! There shall be no sin left against you to be, in the future, quoted to your dismay. Thus says the Lord, In those days and in that time, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve. Such a mode of pardon is according to the riches of His Grace.   
Again, the text implies irreversible certainty. According to the riches of His Grace. For God to pardon and then, afterwards to condemn, would not be according to the riches of His Grace. If Her Majesty were to issue a free pardon for a criminal and then, afterwards, hang him, it would be poor work. It would certainly not be according to the riches of her favor! And if you and I get pardon through Jesus Christ, we can no more be lost than God can become poor in love. Believe in Christ Jesus and get a pardon for your transgressions under the sign manual of Jehovah and you are clear forever! There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from usand how far is that? It is an infinite distance and from an infinite distance our sins can never be brought back. They are gone! They are blotted out! Drowned like the Egyptians in the Red Sea, we shall never see their faces again! That pardon must be irreversible which is given according to the riches of His Grace.   
Once more, it suggests unfailing renewal. It is forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace. It does not mean forgiveness up to a certain point and then, if you sin again, no more forgivenessbut daily forgiveness for daily sina fresh spring rising for fresh thirst. Joseph Hart

sings *This fountain from guilt, not only makes pure, And gives, soon as felt, infallible cure,   
But if guilt removed, returns and remains, Its power may be proved again and again.*

We may come to Christ as freely today as we did 30 years ago and find ourselves washed white again. We may come again with all the accumulated wanderings and backslidings of our past years and, just believing as we did at first, we shall find our soul, again, set at its first liberty and admitted into its first joy! God grant us to know all this in our own souls. I wish I could speak as I can sometimes think, or think as the Word of God allows me to think. O blessed thought, that you and I, condemned and lost and ruined by our guilt, should only need to look to Christ on the Cross and, in a moment, should receive pardon, according to the riches of His Grace!

All for nothing, all freely given, not given as a sham, but as a reality real pardon for real sin, abiding pardon, everlasting pardon, a pardon which retrieves all our loss and adds a charm which unfallen spirits cannot know. O the splendor of God! Where does it flame forth so overpoweringly as in pardoning Grace! Is not this the Glory of God at its fullest, that He passes by transgression and remembers not the iniquity of His people?

III. Our last word is to be upon THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS PARDON. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. Here we see that forgiveness of sin comes to us entirely through Jesus Christ, our Savior, and if we go to Jesus Christ, fixing our eyes especially upon His atoning Sacrifice, we have pardon by virtue of His blood. I see nothing here about any human priestChrist is Priest enough for us. I see nothing about absolution by man. NoIn Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

It must be a very dangerous thing to be hoping for pardon because you have confessed to a man! Whatever manipulations may have been performed upon his shaven head, it must be a very risky thing to have your salvation depend upon whether or not he was properly ordained by a priest of higher rank! We escape all such perils by going to the Fountainhead, even to Christ, Himself, the one Mediator between God and man! According to Gods command, we trust Jesus and receive pardonnot in word onlybut in spirit and in truth. There is no danger in faith in Jesus, for all those who have tried it will tell you how blessed the result has been in their own cases! Pardon by any other means is impossible, but by Jesus Christ it is certain! Everything else fails, but faith in Christ never fails. Only trust Him! Only trust Him and you are pardoned, pardoned at once through His most precious blood!

The text says, We have it and I want to lay stress on that for just a minute. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. We have it! As many as believe in Christ are pardoned. Why, then, should we go to Church and say that we are miserable sinners? Believers are not miserable sinners! They are full often happy in a sense of full remission. If our sins are blotted out, why do we speak to God as if His anger still remained? Shall we lie to God? We are, indeed, miserable sinners if we assume a misery which we have no reason to feel! We are miserable sinners for not believing God and pretending that we do! Is there no difference between a Believer and an unbeliever, so that the same words will suit both one and the other and they may kneel down side by side and both call themselves, miserable sinners? Then what has the Gospel done for Believers? What is the use of the sprinkled blood? There is all the difference in the world between a Believer and an unbeliever!

The unbeliever has the wrath of God abiding on him! But as for the Believer, his sins are forgiven for Christs names sake and let him know it and declare it! Am I not, then, daily to confess sin? Yes, daily as you commit it, but not under the garb of misery, as though you were an unpardoned criminal! Are you not a beloved child? Confess sin with the certainty that you are forgiven and that the sentence of forgiveness runs on and includes these present and future sins as well as all that are past. You are to humbly plead for continued mercy, but you are not to pray as if you were at enmity with God and miserable under a sense of His wrath! Far better is the spirit which sings, O God, I will praise You, for though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comfort me.

That is the way to talk. If you believe, you should speak in that fashion. No longer is the weight and burden of sin lying on your conscience and heartyour load is liftedyou are forgiven! If your child has been offending youand you are angry with him, he feels ill at ease in your presence. At last you say, My Boy, it is all gone, now. Do not offend again. You are quite forgiven. Come here and let me kiss you. Does he reply, Father, I am afraid? If so, it is evident that he does not understand that you have forgiven himand even if he receives your kiss and remains unhappy in your presence, it is clear that he does not believe in you or in the sincerity of your forgiveness. As soon as the light dawns on his mind, Father has quite put all my fault away, then he is merry in his play and easy in his conversation with you.

Now, be with God like a child at home. Do not act towards Him as if He still frowned upon you. He smiles. Do not pray to Him as if you dreaded Him and thought He would smite you. He cannot smite youHe has smitten Christ instead of you. Your debt has been paid and can never be demanded of you. Christ nailed the receipted bill to His Cross in the face of Heaven and earth and Hell! Eternal Justice cannot charge you with sins which were, once and for all, charged on your great Substitute and borne by Him. God is not unrighteous to first punish Christ and then to punish those for whom Christ diedto take the payment first from Christ and afterwards from youfrom the Surety and then from the debtor. No, no! Rest, then, in perfect peace.

Forgiveness according to the riches of His Grace is yours by faith, yours at this moment and you may know it. You that have believed in Christ ought to know that you are accepted in Christ, for you are so accepted and it is a pity not to have the joy of it. I want you to feel the love which rises out of pardoned sin! You must love Him who has removed all your iniquities. I want you to feel the zeal which finds fuel in the forgiveness of sin. Bring your alabaster box and pour the ointment upon His head who has forgiven you so freely. There are no workers like pardoned men and women! There are no givers like pardoned men and women! There are no lovers like pardoned men and women! There are no singers like pardoned men and women! There are no saints before the Throne of God, no courtiers at the right hand of the eternal Sovereign like those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Come, then, you guilty, and receive forgiveness in Christ! Come, you vilest of the vile, the door is set open for you and a loving heart invites you through these lips! I am full of hope that you will come. You must come. Love will constrain you to believe in my Lord. Oh, may the Holy Spirit compel you, now, to come to the Savior and to be cleansed from all sin! When you have obtained mercy hasten to tell others of the boundless mercy of the God of Love and of the riches of His Grace displayed in forgiving you all your trespasses! God bless you for Christs sake. Amen.

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Sermon #2207 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REDEMPTION THROUGH BLOOD THE GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS OFSINS  
NO. 2207

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, JUNE 7, 1891, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.   
Ephesians 1:7.

READ the chapter and carefully note how the Apostle goes to the back of everything and commences with those primeval blessings which were ours before time began. He dwells on the Divine love of old and the predestination which came out of itand all that blessed purpose of making us holy and without blame before Him in love, which was comprehended in the Covenant of Grace. It does us good to get back to these antiquitiesto these eternal things. You shake off something of the dust of time, as you no longer walk down its restless ages, but traverse the glorious eternity where centuries seem no more than fallen leaves by the way. Thousands of years are less than a drop of a bucket compared with the lifetime of the Almighty! How sublime a thing to climb, in contemplation, to the everlasting God and the eternal council chamberand to see the heart of love beating towards the chosen people before all timeand the infinite mind of God devising and purposing their good! This is an exceedingly great refreshment and the wonder is that so few Believers dare to ascend this sublime hill of the Lord, there to commune with Him who Was and Is, and is to come!

After the Apostle had briefly touched upon that subject, he then began to speak of present blessingsmatters of actual experienceand he commenced by saying, In whom we have redemption. The Grace of the eternal past is a matter of faith, but here is something which is within our grasp and enjoyment. The other we believe, but this we actually and literally receive. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

And here let me say what a charming thing it is to deal with experimental divinitynot with theories, but with matters of factgreat facts which are dear to you because they have been worked in you, and you have not been merely a delighted spectator of them, but you have been the subject and object of them! In whom we have redemption. Whether others have it or not, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. We do not hope for it, but we have it. We do not merely think so, but we know that we have it. We are redeemed! We are free from bondage! We are forgiven and are no longer under condemnation!

At this time, as God shall help me, I shall dwell upon the forgiveness of sins. We have not time to plunge into the deeps of the eternal purpose, nor even to dive into the full Doctrine of Redemption, but, as the swallow with his wing touches the brook and then is up and away, so must it be with my thoughts at this timea mere touch of the river of the Water of Life will be a blessing to myself and, as I cast a little spray over you, I hope it will refresh you, also. May the Holy Spirit help our meditation!

I. The first observation, taken distinctly from the text, is thisTHAT THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS A GRAND BLESSING. The Apostle has mentioned it, if you notice, among the great things of GodHis electing love, His adoption of us by Jesus Christ, His acceptance of us in the Beloved. Side by side with these colossal mercies, he puts this one, that we have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. This is a blessing of no mean stature, for it marches with the giants of Election and Adoption. Let it stand prominently out before us at this time.

What is this forgiveness of sins? Too often, in popular talk, it is supposed that the chief and main thought of the forgiven sinner is that he has escaped from Hell. Salvation means much more than this and what it further means is too much kept in the background, but yet I will begin with rescue from punishment, for if sin is pardoned, the penalty is extinguished. It would not be possible for God to forgive and yet to punish. That would be a forgiveness quite unworthy of God. It would, indeed, be no forgiveness at all! We are certain that the everlasting punishment of sin declared in Scripture will never happen to the man who is forgiven. When transgression is removed, the soul stands clear at the bar of God, and there can be no further penalty. I absolve you, says the great Judge and that carries with it weight, so that a man that is forgiven is cleared of the punishment which he must otherwise have borne. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Yet Divine favor restored is a still brighter result of forgiveness to many. Speaking from my own experience, while I was under conviction of sin I had less apprehension of the punishment of sin than I had of sin, itself. I do not know that I very frequently trembled at the thought of HellI did so whenever it came before my mind. But when I was in the hands of the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of bondage convincing me of sin, my great trouble was that God was angry with meproperly and rightly so. I mourned that I had offended my Maker, that I had grieved the living God, that I had sinned against His righteous will and that I could not rejoice in His favor, nor sun myself in His smile. I felt that it was right on the part of the holy God to be displeased with me. I believe that the great joy of forgiveness, to the Believer, is that God has taken away His anger from him. That sweet hymn, which we often sing, is a paraphrase of a passage in Isaiah

*I will praise You every day,   
Now Your angers turned away;   
Comfortable thoughts arise   
From the bleeding Sacrifice.*

Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.

Forgiveness means this among men. A person has grieved and wronged me. I feel hurt in my mind about it. When I forgive him, I no longer feel grieved or angry with himI think of him as beforeand we are on good terms. If my forgiveness is genuineand in Gods case it is emphatically sothen there is no resentment left. The offense is as though it had never been committed. I say to the person who did me wrong, I take a sponge and I wipe it all off the slate. Give me your hand, let us stand as we stood before. The pardon of sin by God is after such a fashion. He blots out the sin as the Oriental erases with his pencil the record made upon his waxen tablet so that no trace of it remains. He smiles where otherwise he must have frowned. He gives complacent love where otherwise there must have been indignation and wrath. Do you not think that this is the sweetest way of looking at the forgiveness of sin? If you are, at this time, under legal work, feeling the tortures of a guilty conscience, you will appreciate such a pardon very highly. In the case of the poor penitent prodigal, it was the kiss of his fathers lips, it was his restoration to his fathers heart, it was the cheering words of his fathers love that constituted to him the sweetest fragrance of the rose of forgiveness. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ has come, that we poor guilty ones may be restored to the favor of God and walk consciously in the light of His Countenance because sin is removed!

This pardon of sin, being of this full and sweet character, involving both the reversal of the penalty of sin and the ending of the distance that intervened between us and God, brings with it the removal of much distress and sorrow from the heart! I do not think that there can be any grief outside of Hell that is more terrible to bear than the wounds of conscience. We read that, Davids heart smote him and, believe me, the heart can smite as with an iron mace and smite where the bruise is intensely felt. Give me into the power of a roaring lion, but never let me come under the power of an awakened, guilty conscience! Yes, shut me up in a dark dungeon, among all manner of loathsome creaturessnakes and reptiles of all kindsbut, oh, give me not over to my own thoughts when I am consciously guilty before God! This, surely, is the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched!

I do not speak, now, what I have merely heard of, though, if you will read Mr. Bunyans, Grace Abounding, you will find a striking account of it there. I speak of what I have felt in my own soul. No pains of body can rival, for a moment, the agonized feeling of the heart when the hot irons of conviction burn their way through the soul. When God sets up the conscience and makes it a target for His arrows, they drink up the life blood of our spirit till we cry out and wonder how such anguish can come to a creature so insignificant. Our soul seems too small a cup to contain such an ocean of miserytoo narrow a field for so cruel a battle. It is not the Lord that is the author of the misery, but He is giving us up, for a while, that we may be filled with our own ways and learn the bitterness of our own sin. When the Lord comes to us with a forgiving word, these sorrows are gone like the mists of the morning when the sun arises. We still grieve to think that we have sinned, but that gnawing remorse, that vulture eating up the liver, is smitten with death and the man breathes hopefully again. Though the penitence remains, the torment is removed from me, when God has forgiven me.

Let me say, here, that full forgiveness of sin, consciously enjoyed, will not only lift an enormous weight from off the soul, but it will breathe into the heart a great joy. When you know that sin is forgiven, you cannot be sad as before. The thought of perfect pardon, if it does but fill the spirit, will thrust out gloom and remove apathy. It will make the lame man leap as a harthe may still be lame, but he will leap as if he were not! And the tongue of the dumb, even though untrained to speech, shall be made to sing concerning Free Grace and dying love. When the thoughts are concentrated upon the enjoyment of complete forgiveness, full reception into the Divine favor and the blotting out of sin, then is the heart lifted into the suburbs of Heaven! My dear Hearers, do you know what I am talking about? Some of you do, blessed be the name of the Lord, but I am afraid that some of you do notand you never will know the sweetness of mercy until you have first tasted the bitterness of sin! You will never know how Divine Grace can heal until you have felt how sin can wound. There is no clothing you till you are stripped. There is no making you alive till you are killed. There is no filling you till you are empty.

The Lord fills the hungry with good things, but the rich He sends away empty. God Himself will never comfort you till you are driven to selfdespairand if you have already come to that, it is a great privilege to me to be allowed to tell you that the fact of forgiveness of sin is not only a doctrine of the creed, but it is a promise of Gods Word! I believe in the forgiveness of sinsthis is no mere formula, but a realized fact with me. Removal of the penalty, removal of Gods offense against us, the clearing away of all the turbid waters within the heart and the creation of joy and peace through perfect reconciliation to Godthis is a summary account of the forgiveness of sin. It is a vast and rich blessing!

II. And now, secondly, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS BOUND UP WITH REDEMPTION BY BLOOD. Take the text, In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Redemption and forgiveness are so put together as to look as if they were the same thing. Assuredly they are so interlaced and intertwisted that there is no having the one without the other.

Do you askHow is it that there should always need to be redemption by blood in order to the forgiveness of sin? I call your attention to the expression, Redemption through His blood. Observe, it is not redemption through His power, it is through His blood. It is not redemption through His love, it is through His blood. This is insisted upon emphatically, since, in order to the forgiveness of sins, it is redemption through His blood, as you have it over and over again in Scripture. Without shedding of blood is no remission. But they saythey saythat Substitution is not just! One said, the other day, that to lay sin upon Christ and to treat Him as guiltyand let Him die for the unjustwas not just! Yet the objector went on to say that God forgave men freely without any atonement at all! Of this wise critic I would askIs that just? Is it just to pass by breaches of the law without a penalty? Why any law at all? And why should men care whether they keep it or break it? It was stated by this critic that God, out of His boundless love, treated the guilty man as if he were innocent. I would askif that is right, where is the wrong of Gods treating us as innocent because of the righteousness of Christ?

I venture to affirm that pardon is needless, if not impossible, upon the theory that the man, though guilty, is treated as if he were not guilty. If all are treated alike, whether guilty or not guilty, why should anyone desire pardon? It were easy to answer quibblers, but they really are not worth the answering! It is to me always sufficient if I find a Truth of God taught in ScriptureI ask no more. If I do not understand it, I am not particularly anxious to understand it! If it is in the Scriptures, I believe it. I like those grand, rocky Truths of the Bible which I cannot break with the hammer of my understanding, for on these I lay the foundations of my souls confidence! Redemption by blood is here linked with forgiveness of sins and, in many other Scriptures we find it plainly stated. It is so. Let that stand for a sufficient answer to all objectors.

And it is so, if we come to think of it, because this reflects great honor upon God. They say, Let God simply forgive the sin and have done with it. But where, then, is His justice? Shall not the Judge of the earth do right? He threatened sin with punishment. If He does not execute His threats, what then? Can we be sure that He will fulfill His promises? If He breaks His Word one way, might He not break it another? If the Lord should not execute the penalty which He has threatened for sin, would it not look as if He made a mistake in threatening a penalty at all? Would it not seem as if He had been too severe, at first, and then had to catch Himself up and revise His own judgment afterwards? And shall that be? Might it not be supposed that, after all, God made much ado about nothing and that He was really jesting with men when He threatened them with fearful punishment on account of sin? Shall God say, Yes, and, No? Shall He speak and not speak?

This is according to the folly of man! Sometimes it may even be wisdom in a fallible man to reverse his word and retract his declaration, but with God this cannot be! It is necessary for the vindication of His own justice, His wisdom and His holiness, that He shall not forego one of His threats any more than one of His promises! And, since it is just that sin should be punished and that, though the sinner should, in wondrous mercy be permitted to go free, it is wise and just that Another should step inGod Himself should step inand bear for the sinner what is due to the justice of the Most High. The Substitution of our Lord in our place is the central Doctrine of the Gospel and it greatly glorifies the name of God.

Besides that, Beloved, that sin should not be pardoned without an Atonement is for the welfare of the universe. This world is but a speck compared with the universe of God. We cannot even imaging the multitudes of beings over which the great Lawgiver has rule. And if it could be whispered anywhere in that universe that, on this planet, God tampered with law, set aside justice, or did anything, in fact, to save His own chosen, so that He threw His own threats behind His back and disregarded His own solemn ordinancewhy, this report would strike at the foundations of the Eternal Throne! Is God unjust in any case? Then how can He judge the universe? What creatures, then, would fear God, when they knew that He could play fast and loose with justice? It were a calamity even greater than Hell, itself, that sin should go unpunished! The very reins of moral order would be snatched from the hand of the great Charioteerand I know not what of mischief would happen! Evil would then have mounted to the high Throne of God and would have become supreme throughout His domains. It is for the welfare of the universe, throughout the ages, that in the forgiveness of sins there should be redemption by blood. Let lovers of anarchy cavil at it, but let good men accept the Sacrifice of the Son of God with joy as the great establishment of law and justice.

Moreover, this also is arranged for our comfort and as assurance of heart. I declare before you all that if I had been anywhere assured, when I was under conviction of sin, that God could forgive me outright without any atonement, it would have yielded no sort of satisfaction to me, for my conscience was sitting in judgment upon myself and I felt that if I were on the Throne of God, I must condemn myself to Hell. Even if I could have derived a temporary comfort from the notion of forgiveness apart from atonement, the question would afterwards have come uphow is this just? If God does not punish me, He ought to do sohow can He do otherwise? He must be just, or He is not God! It must be that such sin as mine should bring punishment upon itself. Never, until I understood the great Truth of God of the substitutionary death of Christ, could my conscience get a moments peace! If an atonement was not necessary for God, it certainly was necessary for meand it seems to me necessary to every conscience that is fairly instructed as to the absolute certainty that sin involves deserved sorrowand that every transgression and every iniquity must have its just recompense of reward. It was necessary for the perpetual peace of every enlightened conscience that the glorious Atonement should have been provided.

Besides that, the Lord meant to save us in a safe way for the promotion of our future reverence for the Law. Now, if sin had been blotted out so readily and nothing more said of it, what effect would that have had on us in the future? I think that everyone who has felt the burden of sin, has stood at the foot of the Cross, heard the cries of the great Sacrifice and read Gods wrath against sin written in crimson lines upon the blessed and perfect Person of the innocent Saviorevery such person feels that sin is an awful thing! You cannot trifle with transgression after a vision of Gethsemane. You cannot laugh at it and talk about the littleness of its demerit, if you have once stood on Golgotha and heard the cry, Eli, Eli, lame Sabachthani? The death of the Son of God upon the Cross is the grandest of all moral lessons because it is a lesson that affects the very soul of the man and changes his whole idea of sin. The Cross straightens him from the desperate twist which sin gave him at the first. The cure of the first Adams fall is the second Adams deaththe second Adams Grace, which comes to us through His great Sacrifice! We love sin till we see that it killed our best Friendand then we loathe it forevermore.

I say, again, that if the great Father forgave you and said, There is nothing in it. Go your way, it is all over, you would have lacked that grand source of sanctified life which now you find in the wounds of Him who has made sin detestable to youand has made perfect obedience, even unto deaththe subject of your souls admiration. Now you long to be unto the great Father, in your measure, what your great Redeemer was to Him when He magnified the Law and made it honorable. This is no mean benefit.

O Beloved Friends, I do bless the Lord, at this time, for the forgiveness of sins through redemption by blood! There is something worth preaching in this Truth of God. You can live on ityou can die on it. I am constantlyalmost every weekat the deathbeds of our members herewe are so large a Church that one or two, every week, are going Home. When we begin to talk about the precious blood of Jesusthe blood of the Everlasting Covenant, you should see the brightness of dying eyes! I mark the quiet of the departing spirit and, as my dear Friends grip my hand, their testimony is unvaryingly, Jesus is the Rock of our confidence and all is well.

O Lord Jesus, hold Your Cross before my closing eyes! O blessed Redeemer, what will a man do in death who has not Your death to be the death of his sin? How can a man live who has never seen You lay down Your life in His place, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God? Whatever others may say, let us repeat our text with solemn assurance, In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

III. But now, thirdlyand the text is very clear upon this, as upon the other two pointsTHE FORGIVENESS OF SIN IS STILL A MATTER OF GRACEAND OF RICH GRACE. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.

I admit that the forgiveness of sins, on Gods part, is a matter of justice, now that the redemption by blood has been completed. The man believes. The man confesses his sin. And it is written, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The Sacrifice is so great that it justly puts away the sin and it is righteously forgiven. But observe this the act of God in forgiving is not one atom the less gracious, because, in His infinite wisdom, He has so contrived that it is unquestionably just. If any make this assertion, they will be called upon to prove itand they can prove it.

Pardon is the more gracious to us that it does not come to us in an unrighteous way. We see Gods great prudence and wisdom in planning the method by which He may be just, and the Justifier of him that believes. Those thoughts and plans on Gods part are all tokens of great love to us. Beloved, it is only by Divine Grace that we are justified, yet that this Grace is exercised in a way of justice causes the Grace to be not less, but even manifestly more gracious!

The death of Christ, the redemption by blood, instead of veiling the Grace of God, only manifests it. Put the thing before your own minds. Suppose that somebody has offended you and you say, Think no more of it. It is all forgiven? Very well. That is kind of you and commendable. It shows the graciousness of your character. But suppose, on the other hand, you were in office as a judge and felt compelled to say, I am willing to forgive you, but your offense has resulted in such great mischiefs and all these things have to be cleared away. I will tell you what I will do. I will clear them away myself. I will bear the result of your sin in order that my pardon may be seen to be most sure and full. I will pay the debt in which you have involved yourself. I will go to the prison to which you ought to go as the consequence of what you have done. I will suffer the effect of your wrongdoing instead of condemning you to suffer it?

Well, now, the forgiveness that costs you so much would manifest your graciousness much more than that which costs you nothing beyond a kind will and a tender heart! Oh, if it is so, that God, the Divine Ruler, the Judge of all the earth, says to guilty man, I will pardon you, but it is imperative that My Law be carried out. And this cannot be done except by the death of My dear Son, who is One with Me, who is very God of very God, who Himself wills to stand in your place and vindicate My justice by suffering the penalty due to youthen I say that the Grace of God is a thousand-fold more clearly shown than by the free forgiveness which modern thought pleads for! Pardon which has cost God more than it cost Him to make all worldswhich has cost Him more than to manage all the empires of His Providencewhich has cost Him His Only-Begotten Son and has cost that Only-Begotten Son a life of sorrow and a death of unutterable and immeasurable anguishI say that this pardon is preeminently gracious! Love is more displayed in this, infinitely more, than by a mere word and a wave of the hand which would dismiss the sinner without any attempt at an atoning sacrifice.

Besides, Beloved, let this always be remembered, that it is in the application of redemption and the personal pardon of any sinner, through the blood of Jesus, that the Grace of God is best seen by that sinner. To each one, that pardon through the Lord Jesus comes, not only according to Grace, but according to the riches of His Grace. I can understand that God should forgive you, all of you. I could hear it with full belief and it would not astonish me. But that He should pardon methat I should have the forgiveness of sins and redemption by bloodthat truly astonishes me! And I believe that any person, under a sense of sin, sees more of the Grace of God in His own salvation than in the salvation of anybody else. He may be quite conscious that he has never been a thief, or a drunk, or a murderer and yet, when he comes to look at it, he may see reasons why the pardon of sin in his case should be more remarkable than even in the case of a drunk, or a thief, or a murderer! There may be elements in his own case which may make him seem to have sinned even more grievously than open transgressors because he transgressed against greater light, with less temptation and with a direr presumption of rebellion against the Most High. That Jesus died is unutterable Gracebut that He loved me and gave Himself for methis is overwhelming Grace and makes the heir of Heaven say with emphasis, Blessed be God that, in Jesus, I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace!

Do you not feel at this time, you that have been pardoned, that nothing but the riches of Gods Grace could ever have pardoned you? No scanty Grace could have provided an atonement equal to your iniquities! Poverty of Grace would have left you ruined by your debt of sin! Riches of Grace were needed and riches of Grace were forthcoming in redemption by blood and in the full, perfect, irreversible forgiveness which God gave you in the day when you believed on Jesus Christ your Savior! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would help you to sing of the Grace of God today and every day!

IV. Thus far have I brought you, then, in three remarks. Kindly follow me in the fourth one, upon which I will not be long.  
Fourthly, THIS FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS ENJOYED BY US NOW. In whom we havewe haveredemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. I remember the astonishment with which I felt as I sat in a ministers meeting and heard one who professed to be a preacher of the Gospel, assert that he did not think that any of us could be sure that he was forgiven. I ventured at once to say that I was sureand I was pleased, but by no means surprised, to find that others dared to say the same. I hope I have hundreds before me who enjoy the same assurance!   
Brothers and Sisters, if there is no consciousness of the forgiveness of sins possible, how can there be any rest for the conscience? Yet Jesus says, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. What rest is possible to the condemned? Can you go to bed tonight with your sins unforgiven? Some of you may have the foolhardiness to do that, but I would not dare to do it! Look where you are. Within a moment you may be dead. Within that moment you will be in Hell, past all hope. In a single instant you may be eternally lostcan you endure the thought? Our breath has but to stop, or the heart to cease beating and instantly life is over! How can you be at peace while sin is unforgiven? Unless sin had made men mad, they would never rest till they were cleared from their sins. There cannot be any true rest without a consciousness of forgiveness. Yet that rest is promisedtherefore the present enjoyment of an assurance of forgiveness must be possible!   
And, next, where could there ever be that great love in the hearts of men and women which we read of in Scripture? She that washed the Saviors feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her headwould she have done so if she had not known that she was forgiven? She loved much because she had had much forgiven her! And the stimulus, the zeal, the fervor that spurs on a man in his service and suffering for the Lord Jesus must arise out of the consciousness that the Lord has done great things for himand the conclusion that, therefore, he must do great things for his Lord. Surely, you have robbed Christianity of its highest moral force if you have denied the possibility of knowing that you are pardoned!   
Moreover, where is there any testimony of the power of Grace? We that come and preach to you would be liars if we, ourselves, have never tasted and handled pardoning Grace. We do, at any rate, but preach to you a second-hand Gospel, which we have never tested and proved for ourselves. If I did not know, in my very soul, that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin, how could I dare to face you with the Gospel message? I have not impudence enough to tell you of what is, or is not the Truth of God, about which I am uncertain myself! God grant me Grace to break stones, or sweep chimneys sooner than come and tell you a cunningly-devised fable, or a tale about which I have no assured certainty, derived from personal knowledge! Could I say to you, I dare say there is bread, but I myself am hungry and I have never eaten a mouthful of the provision which I offer you? Think of my saying to one perishing of thirst, There is Living Water flowing from the Rock, but personally I am thirsty. You might say to me at once, Then go home to your house and next time you appear, be sure of the truth of what you tell us. If

you do not believe it, how should we believe it? Beloved, there are thousands, there are still tens of thousands on earth who know that the Son of God has power on earth to forgive sins! And there are myriads in Heaven who passed to their happiness confident that they had been forgivenand they sang on earth the same song that they sing in Heaven, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! They know it, they have no doubt about it! Many of us know it here and rejoice therein at this moment.   
Dear Friend, what would you give to have this assurance? You may have itBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Whoever believes in Him is justified from all sin. He that believes in Him has everlasting life. Oh, that Gods Grace may lead you to cast away all other confidences and to lay your guilty spirit down at Jesus feet! Then shall you go your way rejoicing that you, also, with us, can say, In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.   
V. Fifthlyand this is only a brief head, but it is a point that must not be left outTHE FORGIVENESS OF SINS BINDS US TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Let us read the text again. In whom we have redemption through His blood. We have nothing apart from Jesus! Every blessing of the Covenant binds us to Christ. Covenant gifts are so many golden chains to fasten the soul of the Believer to his Lord. Our wealth of mercy is all in Christ. There is nothing good outside of Christ. When are we pardoned, Brothers and Sisters? When have we forgiveness? Why, when we are in Him, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. O son of Adam, living without Jesus, hear and take warning! So long as you are out of Christ, you must bear your own burden till it crushes you to the dust! But as soon as you have touched the hem of His garment there is a link of connectionand if you can rise from that to holding Him by the feetthe union is closer! And if you can, from that, become like Simeon, who took Him up in his arms, then may you cry, My eyes have seen Your salvation! When you have Christ to the fullest, you have Grace to the fullest! It is as you are in Christin connection and communion with Christthat you receive the pardon of sin, for all the pardon is in Him. Do you see that?   
In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness is not so much in His office and in His work, as in Himself. When you get Christ, you have redemption, for He is Redemption. When you get Christ, you have forgiveness of sins, for He is the Propitiation for our sins. He has put the sin away by the Sacrifice of Himself. Get Christ and you have the proof, the evidence, the sum, the substance of perfect pardon. If you accept the Beloved, you are accepted in the Beloved. When you are in Him, then you are forgiven, but your forgiveness is only in Him. In Him you have redemptionout of Him you are in bondage.   
Beloved, every day, as we go afresh to God for a sense of pardon, let us know that we can never get it unless we come viewing Jesus. I notice that some Believers, when they get rather dull and cold, begin the work of selfexamination. This may appear very proper, but it is dreary work. I do not believe, dear Friends, if you are very poor, that you will ever get rich by looking through all your empty cupboards. If it is very cold and you have no coals in the cellar, you will not become warm by going into the cellar and seeing that there is nothing below but an empty coal hole. No, noif our Graces are to be revived we must begin with a renewed consciousness of pardon through the precious bloodand the only way to get that sense of pardon is to go to the Cross, again, even as we went at first! I sometimes wonder that you do not get tired of my preaching because I do nothing but hammer away on this one nail. I have driven it in up to the head and I have gone round to the other side to clinch itbut I still keep at it. With me it is, year after year, None but Jesus! None but Jesus! Oh, you great saints, if you have outgrown the need of a sinners trust in the Lord Jesus, you have outgrown your sins! But you have also outgrown your Grace and your saintship has ruined you! He that has the mind of Christ within him must still come to his Lord, just as he came at the first.   
I frankly confess that still I cry to my Lord Jesus   
*Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling.*   
Still, to this day, I have no redemption in myself, but only in Jesus! I am not an inch forwarder as to the ground of my trust. Is it not so with you? Do we not still say of JesusIn whom we have redemption through His blood? To this day we find no reason for forgiveness in ourselves. The precious blood is still our one plea! Lost and condemned are we apart from the one offering of our Great High Priest. But cleansed and justified are we in Him   
*Oh, how sweet to view the flowing   
Of His sin-atoning blood!   
With Divine assurance knowing,   
He has made my peace with God.*   
You know the story of the poor bricklayer who fell from a scaffold, and when they took him up, he was so much injured that they fetched a minister to him, who, stooping over him, said, My dear Man, you have a very short time to live. I entreat you to make your peace with God. To the surprise of the minister, the man opened his eyes and said, Make my peace with God, Sir? It was made for me nearly 1,900 years ago, upon the Cross of Calvary, by Him that loved me and gave Himself for me. Oh, the joy which this creates in the heart! Yes, it is in Jesus that the peace is madeeffectually made, made for me, made for you, made for all Believers! In Jesus is perfect redemption! In Jesus pardon is provided, proclaimed, presented and sealed upon the conscience! Go and live on Jesus; live with Jesus; live in Jesus; never go away from Jesus and may He be dearer to you every day of your lives! Blessed be His adorable name! Amen, and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 1.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK289, 293, 296.

Mr. Spurgeon is recovering from the great weakness left upon him by an attack of influenza, but he hopes to preach at the Tabernacle next Lords-Day. May this sickness be sanctified to the Glory of God!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2863 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GREAT FORGIVENESS FOR GREAT SIN   
NO. 2863

A WATCH-NIGHT SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1903.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 31, 1876.

In whom we have redemption through the blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace.   
Ephesians 1:7.

You scarcely need me to say that Paul is here writing concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, Christ was his constant theme, both in preaching and writing. I have heard of ministers who can preach a sermon without mentioning the name of Jesus from beginning to end. If you ever hear such a sermon as that, mind that you never hear another from that man! If a baker once made me a loaf of bread without any flour in it, I would take good care that he should never do so again. And I say the same of the man who can preach a Christless Gospel! Let those go and hear him who do not value their immortal souls, but, dear Friends, your soul and mine are too precious to be placed at the mercy of such a preacher. Pauls harp had only one string, but he brought such music out of it as never came from any other! He found such infinite variety in Christ that he never exhausted his theme. With him it was Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, Christ everywhereand so he could never have his pen in his hand without writing something in praise of his glorious Lord and Savior!

Paul had good reasons for doing this, for Christ had met him on his way to Damascus, stopped him in his persecuting career, renewed his heart and given him a bias ever afterwards towards his new Master. Never did Paul forget that spot, on the road to Damascus! I will guarantee you that he could have found it to his dying daythat spot where he fell to the ground and heard the Voice from Heaven saying to him, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? He was a different man ever afterwards! That one event had turned the whole current of his life, so that, from then on, for him to live was Christ. Previously, he had breathed out threats and slaughter against all who bore the name of Christ. Now, he breathes out Christ and His Gospel and has nothing else for which he cares to live and is even willing to die for Him! But, says someone, do you not think that Paul carried this idea a little too far? A man of one idea rides his hobby to death and he does not see the other things that are around him. Ah, Sir! Paul did see all around him that which was worth seeing! For him, everything above, below, within, without, around, had Christ in it, just as, on a bright summers day, everything has sunshine in it. And, like the Apostle, we can never exaggerate when we rightly speak of Jesus, for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him is stored up all manner of riches and treasures for poor sinful creatures like ourselves.

I am going to magnify Christ, as His gracious Spirit shall help me, by speaking of the pardon of sin which freely comes to us through the redemption which He obtained for us by the shedding of His precious blood. I shall have two divisions. First, the sins, spoken of in our text, are great sins. And, secondly, the forgiveness, spoken of in our text, is also greataccording to the riches of His Grace.

I. First, then, THE SINS MENTIONED HERE ARE GREAT. Because we preach the greatness of Gods mercy, some wicked minds think that sin is but a little thing. But, Sirs it is not so. And if any of you are living in it, listen to me while I try to show you how great it is.

For, first, see what sin has done to us all. Our first parents lived in a Garden of delights and, if they had not sinned, we would have been heirs to a happy life free from sickness, sorrow and death. But sin entered the Garden of Eden and withered every leaf, blighted every flower and, soon, Adam was driven out to till the ground that brought forth thorns and thistles in abundance. As for the woman, she and her daughters were condemned to bring forth children in pain and sorrow. Now look at the result of sin all over the worldthe poverty that springs from drunkenness, the disease that comes of debauchery, the pangs of conscience that follow all evil-doing. And when you have gazed at the misery now existing on this earth, think of the many graveyards and cemeteries with their myriads of tombs. The very dust which flies down our streets, was, much of it, once alive as part of the body of one of our forefathers! This earth is, indeed, a huge morgue. What was it that slew all these people and dug all these graves? It was sin, for, sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. It is no small thing that has worked all this mischief among mankind!

If any of you doubt the greatness of sin, let me remind you of what has happened to those who have died in it. This Bible, which is the Revelation of God, tells us that sinners who die impenitent are driven from the Presence of God into the outer darkness where there will be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth forever! I cannot adequately depict that dread abode of lost souls, but there are already myriads there, without light, or hope, or joy, or comfort, waiting for the Day of Judgment when their bodies shall rise and body and soul shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. And then will come upon them the terror of the Lord. If I had to describe the woes of the lost, the language I would have to use would be exceedingly strong, but where would I have to look for it? I would not go to Milton and the other poets, but I would have to gather similes most terrible from the lips of the gentle and loving Christ, for it is He who has told us most about these things! Because He loved men so dearly, He faithfully warned them of the wrath to comeand one proof that sin is no trifle is that the wrath to come is so terrible!

If any still doubt whether sin is a great thing, I ask them to remember that it must be great because it takes such great Grace to pardon it. Our text teaches us that the forgiveness of sin is according to the riches of Gods Graceas if, in order to get rid of sin, the Infinite Wealth of His great heart of love must be freely spent. God, who delights in mercy, had to lay out a mint of Grace before sin could be pardoned! Therefore, sin is no small thing. But if you would really know how great a thing sin is, remember what it cost Christ to be its Forgiver. Go to Gethsemane and see what it cost Christ to bear it there. The sin that covered Him with a bloody sweat was no trifle. Then follow Him to Pilates Hall and hear the cruel whips falling on His blessed shoulders, for it is with those stripes that you are healed, and it must be a dire disease that needs such sharp medicine! See the soldiers take Him away and nail Him to the Cross. There He hangs, between Heaven and earth, to die for guilty sinners amid untold anguish which no human eye could see and no mortal mind could understand. Yet there could never have been any forgiveness for sin if there had not been all these pangs on the part of the sinners Substitute. Surely, sin must be a great thing to need such a great Sacrifice to put it away.

While I am recalling these familiar Truths of God, I hope somebody is saying, Ah, Sir, I know that my sins are great! You need not go into particulars, for, if nobody elses sin is great, mine is. Let us all look over the records of this year and see whether it is not so with us. Get out your diary. Ah, you do not put down such things thereyou try to forget them. I have been told that, in Naples, there used to be a pit for every day in the year, and each day they took the dead out of the city and flung them into the pit for that day. So there were 365 of these pits which were opened, year after year. In a similar style, you have buried your sins in these 365 days. Let us roll one of the big stones away and look down. No, no! We could not bear to do so, for even one days sin has such filthiness about it that we cry, if we are in our right senses, Bury my dead out of my sight! Think what your sins have been. Think of the idle words you have spokenfor every one of which you will have to give account. Think of the evil thoughts you have hadangry thoughts, proud thoughts, lustful thoughtsthey are all sins. Oh, what a terrible heap they make! Would any man here like to shoot out his sins on this platform? I can never understand how a so-called priest can ask people to confess their sins to him. I would not make my ear into a common sewer for all the wealth in the world! What foulness there must be on the soul of him who has heard what others have done and who knows what sin he has himself committed! Sin, when we see what it really is, whether in ourselves or in others, horrifies us.

But there is one thing I want you to remember. If there has been nothing done, or said, or thought by you of which you can convict yourself, yet, if you are not now loving Godif for another year you have been Gods enemy, if for another year you have refused Christ and have lived without prayer, without repentance and without seeking to be right with God. If for another year you have been indifferent to the claims of the Most High and careless of His commandsif you have done nothing else but forget Godthat one sin would be enough to cast you into Hell forever! Remember Davids words, the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.

II. Now I turn to the much more joyful side of my subject which is that THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN IS ALSO A GREAT THING.   
Is there such a thing as forgiveness of sin? When Martin Luther was in great trouble because of his sin, he obtained much consolation from the remark of a brother monk, who, observing him so cast down, asked to him, Martin, can you say the Credo? Martin, of course, answered, Yes. Then, do you not remember, said the monk, that in the Credo it is written, I believe in the forgiveness of sins? Light seemed to break in upon Luthers darkness by that simple question, as I pray that it may break upon yours while I speak upon that blessed article of a true Christians creed.   
First, you may judge the greatness of the forgiveness by the greatness of the sin which God forgives in a single moment. I do not know your age, my dear Friend. Say, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, 80 yearspossibly, even 90but, if you now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, this very instant the whole mass of your sin will disappear forever! I have heard of one who had lent much money to a debtor and who had received from him many bonds. And when he found the debtor sinking into hopeless bankruptcy, he sent for him and, after showing him the bonds, the amount of which he was unable to meet, even to the extent of a penny in the pound, the generous creditor said, There is only one way in which we can settle all this debt. And, gathering up all the bonds in his hand, he cast them into the fire. Now, he said, I wish you a happy new year. Go your way, for you are out of debt to me. That was a noble thing for anyone to do, and I feel sure that the bond for a thousand pounds would burn as fast as a bond for 50 pounds. So the Lord takes all the bonds of our sin throughout our whole lifetime and puts them into the blaze of His Infinite Mercyand they all disappear so that, if our sins are searched for, they cannot be found!   
Next, measure the greatness of the forgiveness by the guilt of the sin forgiven. I always feel that I must speak guardedly upon this point, but I will be as bold as I may. Sinner, if you trust in Christ, He will forgive you the blackest sin into which you have ever fallen. If (God grant that it may not be true!) the crime of murder should be on your conscience. If adultery and fornication should have blackened your very soul. If all the sins that men have ever committed, enormous and stupendous in their aggravation, should be rightly charged to your account, yet, remember that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all our sin. And remember, also, he that believes in Him is justified from all things, however black they may be. I like the way Luther talks upon this subject, though he is sometimes rather too bold. He says, Jesus Christ is not a sham Savior for sham sinners, but He is a real Savior who offers a real Atonement for real sin, for gross crimes, for shameless offenses, for transgressions of every sort and every size.   
And a far greater One than Luther has said, Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. I have set the door of Mercy open wide, have I not? There is no one here who will dare to say, Mr. Spurgeon said that I was too guilty to be forgiven. I have said nothing of the kind! However great your guilt, though your sins, like the great mountains tower above the clouds, the floods of Divine Mercy can roll over the tops of the highest mountains of iniquity and drown them all! God give you Grace to believe this and to prove it true this very hour!   
In the third place, the greatness of Gods forgiveness may be judged by the freeness of it. When a poor sinner comes to Christ for pardon, Christ does not ask him to pay anything for it, or to do anything, or to be anything, or to feel anything, but He freely forgives him. I know what you think. I shall have to go through a certain penance of heart, at any rate, if not of body. I shall have to weep so much, or pray so much, or do so much, or feel so much. That is not what the Gospel saysthat is only your fancy. The Gospel is, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Trust Jesus Christ, and the free pardon of sin is at once given without money and without price!

Another thing that indicates its greatness is its immediateness. God will forgive you at once, as soon as you trust Christ. There was a daughter, well beloved by her father, who, in an evil hour, left her home and came to London. Here, having no friends, she soon fell prey to wicked men and became an utter wreck. A city missionary met with her and spoke faithfully to her about her sinand the Holy Spirit brought her to the Saviors feet. The missionary asked for her fathers name and address, and at last she told him. But she said, It is no use for you to write him. I have brought such dishonor on my family that I am quite certain he would not reply to any letter. They wrote to the father and stated the casesand the letter that came back bore on the envelope, in large text hand, the word, IMMEDIATE. Inside, he wrote, I have prayed every day that I might find my child and am rejoiced to hear of her. Let her come home at once. I have freely forgiven her, and I long to clasp her to my bosom.   
Now, Soul, if you seek mercy, this is just what the Lord will do with you. He will send you mercy marked, IMMEDIATE, and you shall have it at once! I recollect how I found mercy, in a moment, as I was told to look to Jesus and I would be forgiven. I did look and, swift as a lightning flash, I received the pardon of sin in which I have rejoiced to this very hour! Why should it not be the same with youthe blackest and worst sinner herethe most unfeeling and the least likely to repent? Lord, grant it, and You shall have the praise!   
Again, the greatness of Gods forgiveness may be measured by the completeness of it. When a man trusts Christ and is forgiven, his sin is so entirely gone that it is as though it had never been! Your children bring home their copy-books without any blots in them, but if you look carefully, you can see where blots have been erased. But when the Lord Jesus Christ blots out the sins of His people, He leaves no marks of erasure and the forgiven sinners are as much accepted before God as if they had never sinned!   
Perhaps someone says, You are putting the matter very strongly. I know I am, but not more strongly than the Word of God does. The Prophet Micah, speaking to the Lord under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Not into the shallows, where they might be dredged up again, but into the great deeps, as in the middle of the Atlantic. Then Isaiah says to the Lord, You have cast all my sins behind Your back. Can you tell me where Gods back is? Gods face is everywherethen where is His back and where are His peoples sins? Why, nowhere at all! Daniel says that the work of the Messiah is to finish the transgressionand it is finished for all who believe in Him. Daniel also says that He is to make an end of sinsthen there is an end of them for all who trust in Him! Then there is that glorious passage which cannot be quoted too oftenIn those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. What? All my sins gone? Yes, they are all gone if you believe in Jesus, for He cast them into His tomb where they are buried forever. This is enough to make you dance, like David did before the Ark, for, when God once pardons a man, He never condemns him again. It is not Gods way to play fast and loose with people. If I am in Christ Jesus, the verdict of, No condemnation, must always be mine, for who can condemn the one for whom Christ has died? No one, for, whom He justified, them He also glorified. If you have trusted your soul upon the Atonement made by the blood of Christ, you are absolved and you may go your way in peace, knowing that neither death nor Hell shall ever divide you from Christ! You are His and you shall be His forever and ever!   
Well, asks one, that is a great thing. How is it to be obtained? It is to be had for nothing, simply for the asking, simply by trusting Christ. If that is done, all is done and all these blessings are yours, and yours forevermore!   
Now I close by showing you how really God forgives sin. I am sure He does, for I have proved it in my own case and I have heard of many more like myself. I have known the Lord to take a man full of sin and renew him and, in a moment to make him feel, and feel it truly, too, God loves me. And he has cried, Abba, Father, and he has begun to pray and has had answers to prayer! And God has manifested His Infinite Grace to him in a thousand ways. By-and-by, that man has been trusted by God with some service for Him, as Paul and others were put in trust with the Gospeland as some of us also are. With some of us, the Lord has been very familiar and very kind and has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.   
Now I have done when I have just said that, as these things are true, then nobody ought to despair. Come, Sister, smooth those wrinkles out of your forehead! You have been saying, I shall never be saved, but you must not talk like that, for Christs forgiveness of sin is according to the riches of His Grace. And, Brother, are you in trouble because you have sinned against God? As He is so ready to forgive, you ought to be sorry that you have grieved such a gracious God! As He is so ready to forgive, let us be ready to be forgiven! Let us not leave this house, though the midnight hour is about to strike, until we have received this great redemption, this great forgiveness for great sin!   
Perhaps someone says, When I get home, I will ask Gods forgiveness. Do not wait until you get home! Suppose that I had done some wrong to any of you and that I sat next to youI do not think that I should wait until we entered the new year before asking you to forgive me. Do so with Godsay to Him, Since You are so ready to forgive, I ask to be forgiven. I trust that I shall be forgiven through Jesus Christ, Your Son. It is a grand thing to begin the new year with a new heart and a new spirit! That would set all the bells of your soul ringing. The question is, Will you believe on the Son of God? In the name of Jesus Christ who died upon the Cross, I demand your faith in Him! He is no impostor. He is no pretender, He is worthy of your hearts trust, so believe in Him. I pray the Holy Spirit to work this faith in you, that you may be saved, and saved now, and receive at once the forgiveness of all your sins!   
Thus have I preached the Gospel to you. If you reject it, it is at your peril. I draw a ring round you as the Roman ambassador drew one round the Eastern monarch and said to him, Step out of that ring, and it will mean war with Rome. So I draw a ring round the seat where you are sitting and say to you, in the name of God, You must not rise up from that seat until you have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ, or else have taken upon yourself the responsibility of remaining an enemy of God, for I can say no more to you till the Judgment Day breaks and I have to give account for preaching this sermonand you have to give account for hearing it! I can say no more than this! There is pardon to be obtained by believing! Jesus Christ is fully worthy of your confidence trust Him now and you shall receive full and free forgiveness! The Lord help you to do so, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK548, 562, 595. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 15.**

We have read this chapter together many times. Possibly some of us have read it hundreds of times, yet whenever we read it, we always find something fresh in it. It is always bright and sparkling, full of diamonds and other precious gems of Truth.

Verses 1-3. Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners, to hear Him, and the Pharisees, and scribes murmured, saying, This Man receives sinners, and eats with them. And He spoke this parable unto them. The deepest feelings of our Saviors heart seem to have been brought out by the two classes of persons here mentionedHis pity and compassion towards the sinfuland His righteous anger at the perpetual objections of the hypocritical Pharisees and scribes. The one class caused His heart to overflow with love, the other excited His burning indignation, yet, even then, His soul was moved with pity and tenderness toward the wandering and erring. We ought to be grateful to the Pharisees for having led our Lord to utter the three wonderful parables which we are about to read. Luke says, He spoke this parable unto them, implying that the three are really one, a picture in three panels. The whole plan of salvation is not to be found in either of the parables by itself, but in all three combined. Some points omitted in any one of them will be found in one of the others. He spoke this parable unto them, saying.

3-7. Saying, what man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulder, rejoicing, and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. The shepherd had an extraordinary joy in his flock through the wandering and recovery of that one sheep. If they had all stayed in the fold and none of them had strayed away, he would have been glad, but there would have been a sort of tameness and sameness about his constant satisfaction with them. But that wandering sheep stirred up other emotions in his heart and when he had found it, he experienced a new joy, a higher joy than he would otherwise have known! So, though sin is a great evil, yet it has been overruled by God in such a way as to introduce a new joy into the universe.

Songs of praise that would never have made the angels harps to ring are now heard in Paradise! There would never have been any repentance if there had never been any sinand the love of the Great and Good Shepherd towards wandering sheep would never have been revealed if no sheep had ever wandered from the fold. I suppose it was some such feeling as this that caused Augustine somewhat rashly to exclaim, concerning the Fall, O beata culpa!O happy fault which has thus made manifest the abounding mercy of God! Looked at in one aspect, all sin is an unutterable calamity, but as it has had the effect of displaying still more of the matchless mercy of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, we see how God brings forth good out of evil!

The chief point of the parable is the shepherds joy derived from the finding of the lost sheep. Our Savior needed no other reason for looking after publicans and sinners than the fact that He would get far more joy out of them than He would out of the Pharisees and scribes, even if they were what they professed to be, just persons, which need no repentance. This first panel of the picture specially sets forth the work of the Son of God. Why was not the Fathers work put first, as the Trinity is, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Why is it, also, that in the Benediction, Paul writes, The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Why, because the love of Christ is the first thing that the sinner apprehends! Our first Christian experience is not, as a rule, a knowledge of the Holy Spirit or the Father, but, to our consciousness, it is Jesus Christ who is first revealed to us. I think it is for this reason that the work of the Son of God is here set forth first.

8-10. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she loses one piece, does not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. As I have already said concerning the lost sheep, there was a new joy over the recovery of the lost silver. The woman always rejoiced over the pieces of silver, but that one particular piece had been the cause of new joythe joy which is experienced whenever the sorrow of loss is outweighed by the joy of finding again that which was lost! Is this woman intended to represent the Church of Chris, and is she thus set before us because the Church is the great agent under the control of the Divine Spirit, in seeking the lost, carrying the lighted candle of the Word, sweeping with the besom of earnest, faithful preaching, applying the Law of the Lord to the conscience of man and turning everything upside down until, at last, the lost piece of silver is found? If so, this second panel of the picture sets forth the work of the Holy Spirit as worked through the Church of Christ.

11-13. And He said, A certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days afterfor sin is very rapid in its development and sinners are often in great haste to get away from God. The young mans heart was already wrong, or he would not have wanted to be his own master. He was already away in the far countryso far as his heart was concernedand it was not long before his body followed. Not many days after

13-15. The younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in need. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. Probably that was the best thing he could do for him and, usually, when the world does the best it can for a sinner, it sets him feeding swine. It was the most degrading employment to which a Hebrew could be put and, in like manner, sin, before it is finished, brings forth degradation on the way to bringing forth death!

16. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: but no man gave unto him. He would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but he could not, for he was a man and not one of the swine. Worldlings are happy in their own poor way and I, for one, never grudge them their husks. One never craves the slop that is given to the pigswe let them have their trough as full as they please, and never want so much as a taste of it! So, when sinners are full of worldly joys, we may not envy them and we may scarcely blame them. Let the swine have their husks. Once, we too would gladly have filled our belly with themand if we did not, it was not because we would not, but because we could not.

17. And when he came to himself. For sin is insanity! He was out of his mind while he was acting so foolishlyWhen he came to himself.   
17-19. He said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants. It was the knowledge that there was plenty in his fathers house that led him back! And you may depend upon it that the preaching of full salvation rich in blessing is a strong inducement to a sinner to cry, I will arise and go to my Father. This prodigal son might never have gone back if his father had kept a miserly house with a scanty table. But he knew that even the servants in the kitchen had bread enough and to spare. His father never stinted themthey had what they needed, and there was always more than they could eatso there was no need for his son to perish with hunger. In like manner, the extraordinary bounty of God in Christ Jesusthe richness of His free Redemption is, I doubt not, the means of bringing many a starving soul to Christ. The prodigal said that the servants had bread enough and to spare. There are some who seem to think that in Christ there is only just bread enough, but we believe that the largest possible idea of the value of His Redemption may be indulged and, oftentimes, the thought that first enters the sinners ear and heart is that there is bread enough and to spare, so why should he not have some of the spare bread, at any rate? That was the way that the prodigal argued. He felt sure that his father could feed another hired servant, so he resolved that he would ask to be engaged in that capacity. Yet you know that he never asked thathis father stopped him before he could make that request.   
20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him. Perhaps before he saw his fatherhis father saw him.   
20. And had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Matthew Henrys comment on this verse is excellentHis father saw him. Here were eyes of mercy. And had compassion. Here was a heart of mercy. And ran. Here were feet of mercy. And fell on his neck. Here were arms of mercy. And kissed him. Here were lips of mercy. It was all mercy from first to last!   
21. And the son said unto him. The father kissed his son before he had time to say anything! And Divine compassion is swifter even than our prayers.   
21, 22. Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. He did not let him finish his prayer with the request that he might be taken on as a hired servant. That part which was legal he stopped with a kiss on his mouth and then he said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.

22-24. And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. This, again, was a new joy in that family circle! There was joy when the elder brother was born and joy when the younger son came into the householdbut this joy over his return was one that they never would have known if he had not gone away. So, there is joy to be had even out of sinners. Christs objective was to show that, bad as the publicans and other gross sinners were, and despised as they were by the Pharisees and scribes, yet there was joy to be had out of them. By their salvation, the very heart of the Great Father is rejoiced!

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. The elder brother in our day says, I do not believe in these revival services. I like regular, orderly proceedings and I do not approve of these crowds of people coming to hear the Word under such undue excitement as is sure to result. That elder brother thought he knew a great many things. He did not get carried away by excitement, as other people didhe was too old for thathe was a man of very proper habits and he liked everything done in a cold orthodox style.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. What are you all doing? Have you gone out of your minds? Why are you all dancing? Who is to pay for that music? You had better have been along with me out in the fields at work. What is the meaning of all this merriment?

27. And he said unto him, Your brother is home: and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. These servants spoke as some of us have told to others what the Lord has done when souls have been savedthe unregenerate quickened, and those that were far off from God, by wicked works, have come back to Him. We have told it all in the simplicity of our hearts and have been so glad to tell the good tidings that we felt as if we could keep on dancing to the music while we were telling the story!

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. I never know which to admire the morethe love of the father in going to meet the returning prodigal, or in going out to talk with this coldhearted elder brother. He was a son, but he had not the true spirit of his fatherhe had fallen into a very wrong state of mindjust like certain Christians I know who have always been very proper, and who have little sympathy with those who have been great sinners. They seem as if they do not want to see such people as these brought to the Savior. Why, they exclaim, there are girls from the street and men that have been burglars, and all sorts of rabble being brought into the church! I have heard such remarks and I have seen the same sort of spirit displayed in the looks of others who have not liked to say what they thought. Yet they themselves were no better than others by nature, though Grace has done much in restraining them from the sin into which others have fallenand it was wrong for them to talk as if they were sheer legalists, as this Pharisaic elder brother did!

29. And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. A Christian of this stamp seems to say to the Lord, I have been Your child all these years, yet I am still full of doubts and fears. I have none of the high joys that I see these other people have! You never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. I am chastened every morning and I go sighing all the day long. I seem to get but little comfort, yet here are these young folk who have not been saved a weekand they seem to be full of assurance and they are as happy as ever they can be. Surely, they cannot belong to the tried family of God! How can they be sincere with all that music and dancing? I cannot endure it, for I never had such an experience.

30, 31. But as soon as this your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. Think of that, you who are the Lords people, but who have fallen into a grumbling state of heart. Are you not always with your Lord and is not all that He has yours? If you have never had a kid to make merry with your friends, whose fault is that? Your Father never denied it to you. All in His house is yours, so take the good that He provides for you and rejoice over it, for then you will be in a fit state to go to meet your poor returning prodigal brother and to welcome him with a smiling face and a gladsome heart!

32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found. After that reply, there was nothing more that could be said, even by the grumbling elder brother.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.  
END OF VOLUME 49. Sermon #295 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE TREASURE OF GRACE   
NO. 295

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 22, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:7.

AS is Isaiah among the Prophets, so is Paul among the Apostles. Each stands forth with singular prominence, raised up by God for a conspicuous purpose and shining as a star of extraordinary brilliance. Isaiah spoke more of Christ and described more minutely his passion and his death than all the other Prophets put together. Paul proclaimed the grace of Godfree, full, sovereign, eternal gracebeyond all the glorious company of the Apostles. Sometimes he soared to such amazing heights, or dived into such unsearchable depths, that even Peter could not follow him. He was ready to confess that our beloved brother Paul, recording to the wisdom given unto him, had written some things hard to be understood.

Jude could write of the judgments of God and reprove with terrible words, ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. But he could not tell out the purpose of grace as it was planned in the eternal mind, or the experience of grace as it is felt and realized in the human heart, like Paul. There is James againhe, as a faithful minister, could deal very closely with the practical evidences of Christian character. And yet he seems to keep very much on the surface. He does not bore down deep into the substratum on which must rest the visible soil of all spiritual graces. Even John, most favored of all those Apostles who were companions of our Lord on earthsweetly as the beloved disciple writes of fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christeven John does not speak of grace so richly as Paul, in whom God first showed forth all longsuffering as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.

Not indeed that we are at any liberty to prefer one Apostle above another. We may not divide the Church, saying, I am of Paul, I of Peter, I of Apollos. But we may acknowledge the instrument which God was pleased to use. We may admire the way in which the Holy Spirit fitted him for his work. We may, with the Churches of Judea, glorify God in Paul. Among the early fathers Augustine was singled out as the Doctor of Grace, so much did he delight in those doctrines that exhibit the freeness of Divine favor. And surely we might affirm the like of Paul.

Among his compeers he outstripped them all in declaring the grace that brings salvation. The sense of grace pervaded all his thoughts as the lifeblood circulates through all the veins of ones body. Does he speak of conversion, he was called by grace. No, he sees grace going before his conversion and separating him from his mothers womb. He attributes all his ministry to grace. To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. See him at any time and under any circumstances, whether bowed down with infirmity, or lifted to the third heavens with revelation, he has but one account to give of himself, By the grace of God I am what I am.

There are no ministers who contend so fully and so unflinchingly for free, sovereign, unconditional grace, as those who before their conversion have reveled in gross and outrageous sin. Your gentleman preachers who have been piously brought up and sent from their cradle to school, from school to college and from college to the pulpit, without encountering much temptation, or being rescued from the haunts of profanitythey know comparatively little and speak with little emphasis of free grace. It is a Bunyan who breathed curses, a Newton who was a very monster in sinit is the like of these, who cannot forget for one hour of their lives afterwards, the grace that snatched them from the pit and plucked them as brands from the burning.

Strange, indeed, that God should have it so. The providence is inscrutable that permits some of the Lords chosen people to wander and rove as far as sheep can. Such men, however make the most valiant champions for that grace which only can rescue any sinner from eternal woe.

This morning we propose to expound to you the riches of Gods grace, this is the Treasure. Secondly, we shall speak of the Forgiveness of Sins, which is to be judged of by that Measure. The forgiveness is according to the riches of His grace. And we shall afterwards wind up by considering some of the privileges, connected therewith.

I. First, consider the RICHES OF HIS GRACE. In attempting to search out that which is unsearchable, we must, I suppose, use some of those comparisons by which he are wont to estimate the wealth of the monarchs and mighty ones of this world. It happened once that the Spanish ambassador, in the halcyon days of Spain, went on a visit to the French ambassador and was invited by him to see the treasures of his master. With feelings of pride he showed the repositories, profusely stored with earths most precious and most costly wealth. Could you show gems so rich, said he, or anything the like of this for magnificence of possessions in all your sovereigns kingdom?

Call your master rich? replied the ambassador of Spain, why, my masters treasures have no bottomalluding, of course, to the mines of Peru and Petrosa. So truly in the riches of grace there are mines too deep for mans finite understanding ever to fathom. However profound your investigation, there is still a deep couching beneath that baffles all research. Who can ever discover the attributes of God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection? We are at a loss to estimate the very quality and properties of grace as it dwells in the mind of Deity. Love in the human breast is a passion. With God it is not so. Love is an attribute of the Divine essence. God is Love. In men, grace and bounty may grow into a habit, but grace with God is an intrinsic attribute of His nature, He cannot but be gracious. As by necessity of His Godhead He is omnipotent and omnipresent, so by absolute necessity of His Divinity is He gracious.

Come then, my Brethren, into this glittering mine of the attributes of the grace of God. Every one of Gods attributes is infinite and therefore this attribute of grace is without bounds. You cannot conceive the infinity of God, why, therefore should I attempt to describe it? Remember, however, that as the attributes of God are of the like extent, the gauge of one attribute must be the gauge of another. Or, further, if one attribute is without limit, so is another attribute. Now, you cannot conceive any boundary to the omnipotence of God. What cannot He do? He can create, He can destroy. He can speak a myriad universes into existence, or he can quench the light of myriads of stars as readily as we tread out a spark. He has but to will it and creatures without number sing His praise. Yet another volition and those creatures subside into their naked nothingness, as a moments foam subsides into the waste that bears it and is lost forever.

The astronomer turns his tube to the remotest space, he cannot find a boundary to Gods creating power. But could he seem to find a limit, we would then inform him that all the worlds on worlds that cluster in space, thick as the drops of morning dew upon the meadows, are but the shreds of Gods power. He can make more than all these, can dash those into nothingness and can begin again. Now as boundless as is His power so infinite is His grace. As He has power to do anything, so has He grace enough to give anythingto give everything to the very chief of sinners. Take another attribute if you pleaseGods Omniscience, there is no boundary to that. We know that His eye is upon every individual of our raceHe sees him as minutely as if he were the only creature that existed. It is boasted of the eagle that though he cannot outstare the sun, yet when at his greatest height, he can detect the movement of the smallest fish in the depths of the sea.

But what is this compared with the Omniscience of God? His eye tracks the sun in his marvelous course. His eye marks the winged comet as it flies through space. His eye discerns the utmost bound of creation inhabited or uninhabited. There is nothing hid from the light thereof, with Him there is no darkness at all. If I mount to Heaven He is there. If I dive to Hell He is there. If I fly mounted on the morning ray beyond the western sea

*His swifter hand shall first arrive,*

*And there arrest the fugitive.*   
There is no limit to His understanding, nor is there to His grace. As His knowledge comprehends all things, so does His grace comprehend all the sins, all the trials, all the infirmities of the people upon whom his heart is set.

Now, my dear Brethren, the next time we fear that Gods grace will be exhausted, let us look into this mineand then let us reflect that all that has ever been taken out of it has never diminished it a single particle. All the clouds that have been taken from the sea have never diminished its depth and all the love and all the mercy that God has given to all but infinite numbers of the race of man, has not diminished by a single grain the mountain of His grace. But to proceed further. We sometimes judge of the wealth of men, not only by their real estate in mines and the like but by what they have on hand stored up in their treasury. I must take you now,

my Brethren, to the glittering treasury of Divine Grace.

You know its name, it is called the Everlasting Covenant. Have you not heard the marvelous story of what was done in the olden time before the world was made? God ordained that man would fall, but He determined of His own infinite purpose and will that He would raise out of this Fall a multitude which no man can number. The Eternal Father held a solemn council with the Son and Holy Spirit. Thus spoke the FatherI will that those whom I have chosen be saved! Thus said the SonMy Father, I am ready to bleed and die that Your justice may not suffer and that your purpose may be executed. I will, said the Holy Spirit, that those whom the Son redeems with blood shall be called by grace, shall be quickened, shall be preserved, shall be sanctified and perfected and brought safely home.

Then was the Covenant written, signed and sealed and ratified between the Sacred Three. The Father gave His Son, the Son gave Himself and the Spirit promises all His influence, all His Presence, to all the chosen. Then did the Father give to the Son the persons of His elect, then did the Son give Himself to the elect and take them into union with Him. And then did the Spirit in covenant vow that these chosen ones should surely be brought safely home at last. Whenever I think of the old Covenant of Grace, I am perfectly amazed and staggered with the grace of it. I could not be an Arminian on any inducement. The very poetry of our holy religion lies in these ancient things of the everlasting hills, that glorious Covenant signed and sealed and ratified, in all things ordered well from old eternity.

Pause here, my Hearer, awhile and thinkbefore this world was made, before God had settled the deep foundations of the mountains, or poured the seas from the layer of the bottom of His handHe had chosen His people and set His heart on them. To them He had given Himself, His Son, His Heaven, His all. For them did Christ determine to resign His bliss, His home, His life. For them did the Spirit promise all His attributes, that they might be blessed. O Grace Divine, how glorious You are, without beginning, without end. How shall I praise You?

Take up the strain you angels. Sing these noble themes, the love of the Father, the love of the Son and the love of the Spirit. This, my Brethren, if you think it over, may well make you estimate aright the riches of Gods grace. If you read the roll of the Covenant from beginning to end, containing as it does, election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, Heaven, immortalityif you read all this, you will say, This is riches of graceGod, great and infinite! Who is a God like unto You for the riches of Your love!

The riches of great kings again, may often be estimated by the munificence of the monuments which they reared to record their feats. We have been amazed in these modern times at the marvelous riches of the kings of Nineveh and Babylon. Modern monarchs with all their appliances, would fail to erect such monstrous piles of palaces as those in which old Nebuchadnezzar walked in times of yore. We turn to the pyramids, we see there what the wealth of nations can accomplish. We look across the sea to Mexico and Peru and we see the relics of a semi-barbarous people but we are staggered and amazed to think what wealth and what mines of riches they must have possessed before such works could have been accomplished.

Solomons riches are perhaps best judged of by us when we think of those great cities which he built in the wilderness, Tadmore and Palmyra. When we go and visit those ruins and see the massive columns and magnificent sculpture, we say, Solomon, indeed, was rich. We feel as we walk amid the ruins somewhat like the queen of Sheba, even in Scripture the half has not been told us of the riches of Solomon. My brethren, God has led us to inspect mightier trophies than Solomon, or Nebuchadnezzar or Montezuma, or all the Pharaohs. Turn your eyes yonder, see that bloodbought host arrayed in white, surrounding the Thronehark how they sing, with voice triumphant, with melodies seraphic, Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

And who are these? Who are these trophies of His grace? Some of them have come from the stews of harlotry. Many of them have come from the taverns of drunkenness. No, morethe hands of some of those so white and fair, were once red with the blood of saints. I see yonder the men that nailed the Savior to the treemen who cursed God and invoked on themselves death and damnation. I see there Manasseh, who shed innocent blood so much and the thief who in the last moment looked to Christ and said, Lord. remember me.

But I need not turn your gaze so far aloft. Look, my Brethren, around you do not know your next neighbor by whom you are sitting this morning, it may be. But there are stories of grace that might be told by some here this morning that would make the very angels sing more loudly than they have done before. Well, I know these cheeks have well nigh been scarlet with tears when I have heard the stories of free grace wrought in this congregation. There are those known to me, but of course not so to you, who were among the vilest of men, the scum of society. We have here those to whom cursing was as their breath and drunkenness had grown to be a habit.

And yet here they areservants of God and of His Church and it is their delight to testify to others what a Savior they have found. Ah, but my Hearer, perhaps you are one of those trophies, and if so, the best proof of the riches of His grace is that which you find in your own soul. I think God to be gracious when I see others saved, I know He is because He has saved me. That wayward, willful boy, who scoffed a mothers love and would not be melted by all her prayerswho only wished to know a sin in order to perpetrate it! Is he standing here to preach the Gospel of the grace of God to you today? Yes. Then there is no sinner out of Hell that has sinned too much for grace to save. That love which can reach to me, can reach to you. Now I know the riches of His grace, because I hope I prove it and feel it in my own inmost heart. My dear Hearermay you know it, too, and then you will join with our poet, who says

*Then loudest of the crowd Ill sing,   
While hearers resounding mansions ring With shouts of Sovereign Grace.*

Go a little further now. We have thus looked at the wine and treasures and at the monuments. But more. One thing which amazed the queen of Sheba, with regard to the riches of Solomon, was the sumptuousness of his table. Such multitudes sat down to it to eat and drink and though they were many, yet they all had enough and to spare. She lost all heart when she saw the provisions of a single day brought in. I forget just now, although I meant to refer to the passage, how many fat beast, how many bullocks of the pasture, how many bucks and fallow deer and game of all sorts and how many measures of flour and how many gallons of oil were brought to Solomons table every day, but it was something marvelous. And the multitudes that had to feast were marvelous, also, yet had they all enough.

And now think, my Brethren, of the hospitalities of the God of grace each day. Ten thousand thousand of His people are this day sitting down to feast. Hungry and thirsty they bring large appetites with them to the banquet, but not one of them returns unsatisfied. There is enough for each, enough for all, enough forevermore. Though the host that feed there is countless as the stars of Heaven, yet I find that not one lacks his portion. He opens His hand and supplies the want of every living saint upon the face of the earth. Think how much grace one saint requires, so much that nothing but the Infinite could supply him for one day. We burn so much fuel each day to maintain the fire of love in our hearts, that we might drain the mines of England of all their wealth of coal.

Surely were it not that we have infinite treasures of grace, the daily consumption of a single saint might out-demand everything that is to be found upon the face of the earth. And yet it is not one but many saints and many hundreds, not for one day, but for many yearsnot for many years only, but generation after generation, century after century, race after race of men, living on the fullness of God in Christ. Yet are none of them starved. They all drink to the full. They eat and are satisfied. What riches of grace then may we see in the sumptuousness of His hospitality.

Sometimes, my Brethren, I have thought if I might but get the broken meat at Gods back door of grace I should be satisfied. Like the woman who said, The dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the masters table. Or like the prodigal who said, Make me as one of your hired servants. But you will remember that no child of God is ever made to live on husks. God does not give the parings of His grace to the meanest of them, but they are all fed like Mephibosheth. They eat from the kings own table the daintiest dishes. And if one may speak for the rest, I think in matters of grace we all have Benjamins messwe all have ten times as we could have expected. Though not more than our necessities, yet are we often amazed at the marvelous plenty of grace which God gives us in the Covenant and the promise.

Now we turn to another point to illustrate the greatness of the riches of Gods grace. A mans riches may often be judged of by the equipage of his children, the manner in which he dresses his servants and those of his household. It is not to be expected that the child of the poor man, though he is comfortably clothed, should be arrayed in like garments to those which are worn by the sons of princes. Let us see, then, what are the robes in which Gods people are appareled and how they are attended. Here again I speak upon a subject where a large imagination is needed and my own utterly fails me.

Gods children are wrapped about with a robe, a seamless robe, which earth and Heaven could not buy the like of, if it were once lost. For texture it excels the fine linen of the merchants. For whiteness it is purer than the driven snow. No looms on earth could make it, but Jesus spent His life to work my robe of righteousness. There was a drop of blood in every throw of the shuttle and every thread was made of His own hearts agonies. Tis a robe that is Divine, complete. A better one than Adam wore in the perfection of Eden. He had but a human righteousness though a perfect onewe have a Divinely perfect righteousness. Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed, for your Saviors garment is on you. The royal robe of David is wrapped about his Jonathan.

Look at Gods people as they are clothed, too, in the garments of sanctification. Was there ever such a robe as that? It is literally stiff with jewels. He arrays the meanest of His people every day as though it were a wedding day. He arrays them as a bride adorns herself with jewels. He has given Ethiopia and Sheba for them and He will have them dressed in gold of Ophir. What riches of grace, then, must there be in God who thus clothes His children!

But to conclude this point upon which I have not as yet begun. If you would know the full riches of Divine Grace, read the Fathers heart when He sent His Son upon earth to die. Read the lines upon the Fathers countenance when He pours His wrath upon His only begotten and His WellBeloved Son. Read, too, the mysterious handwriting on the Saviors flesh and soul, when on the Cross, quivering in agony the waves of swelling grief do over His bosom roll. If you would know love you must repair to Christ and you shall see a Man so full of pain that His head, His hair, His garments are bloody.

Twas love that made Him sweat as it were great drops of blood. If you would know love, you must see the Omnipotent mocked by His creatures. You must hear the Immaculate slandered by sinners. You must hear the Eternal One groaning out His life and crying in the agonies of death, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? To sum up all in one, the riches of the grace of God are infinite, beyond all limitthey are inexhaustible. They can never be drainedthey are all-sufficient, they are enough for every soul that ever shall come to take of them. There shall be enough forever while earth endures, until the last vessel of mercy shall be brought home safely. So much, then, concerning the riches of His grace.

II. For a minute or two, let me now dwell upon THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. The treasure of Gods grace is the measure of our forgiveness. This forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of His grace. We may infer, then, that the pardon which God gives to the penitent is no worthless pardon. Have not you asked a mans pardon sometimes and he has said, Yes, I forgive you, and you have thought, Well, I would not even have asked for pardon if I thought you would have given it in such a surly style as that. I might as well have continued as I was, as to be so ungraciously forgiven.

But when God forgives a man, though he is the chief of sinners, He puts out His hand and freely forgives. In fact, there is as much joy in the heart of God when He forgives, as there is in the heart of the sinner when he is forgiven. God is as blessed in giving as we are in receiving. It is His very nature to forgive. He must be gracious, He must be loving and when He lets His heart of love out to free us from our sins it is with no stinted stream. He does it willingly, He upbraids us not. Againif pardon is in proportion to the riches of His grace, we may rest assured it is not a limited pardon, it is not the forgiving of some sins and the leaving of others upon the back. No, this were not Godlike, it were not consistent with the riches of His grace. When God forgives He draws the mark through every sin which the believer ever has committed, or ever will commit.

That last point may stagger you, but I believe, with John Kent, that in the blood of Christ   
*Theres pardon for transgressions past, It matters not how black their cast.   
And, oh, my soul, with wonder view,   
For sins to come theres pardon, too.*

However many, however heinous, however innumerable your sins may have been, the moment you believe they are every one of them blotted out. In the Book of God there is not a single sin against any man in this place whose trust is in Christnot a single one, not even the shadow of one, not a spot, or the remnant of a sin remainingall is gone. When Noahs flood covered the deepest mountains, you may rest assured it covered the molehills. And when Gods love covers the little sins it covers the big ones and they are all gone at once!

When a bill is receipted fully there is not an item which can be charged again. And when God pardons the sins of the Believer there is not one single sin left, not even a fraction of one can ever be brought to His remembrance again. No, more than thiswhen God forgivesHe not only forgives all but once and for all. Some tell us that God forgives men and yet they are lost. A fine god yours! They believe that the penitent sinner finds mercy, but that if he slips or stumbles in a little while he will be taken out of the Covenant of Grace and will perish. Such a covenant I could not and would not believe in. I tread it beneath my feet as utterly despicable.

The God whom I love, when He forgives, never punishes afterwards. By one sacrifice there is a full remission of all sin that ever was against a Believer, or that ever will be against him. Though you should live till your hair is bleached thrice over, till Methuselahs thousand years should pass over your furrowed brow, not a single sin shall ever stand against you, nor shall you ever be punished for a single sin. Forever sin is forgiven, fully forgiven, so that not even part of the punishment shall be executed against you.

Well, but, says one, how is it that God does punish His children? I answer, He does not. He chastises them as a father, but that is a different thing from the punishment of a judge. It the child of a judge were brought up to the bar and that child were freely forgiven all that he had done amissif justice exonerated and acquitted himit might nevertheless happen that there was evil in the heart of that child which the father, out of love to the child, might have to whip out of him. But there is a great deal of difference between a rod in the hand of the executioner and a rod in a fathers hand. Let God smite me, if I sin against Him. Yet it is not because of the guilt of sinthere is no punishment in it whatsoeverthe penal clause is done away with. It is only that He may cure me of my faultthat He may fetch the folly out of my heart.

Do you chasten your children vindictively because you are angry with them? No. But because you love them. If you are what parents should be, the chastisement is a proof of your affection and your heart smarts more than their body pains when you have to chasten them for what they have done amiss. God is not angry against His children, nor is there a sin in them which He will punish. He will whip it out of them, but punish them for it He will not, O glorious grace! It is a Gospel worth preaching

*The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in His crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through Christs blood.*

All is gone. Every atom gonegone forever and ever. And well he knows

it *Now freed from sin I walk at large,   
My Saviors blood my full discharge.   
At His dear feet my soul I lay,   
A sinner saved and homage pay.*

Having thus spoken of the pardon of sin as being fully commensurate with the grace of God, I will put this question to my hearerMy friend, are you a forgiven man? Are your sins all gone? No, says one, I cannot say they are, but I am doing my best to reform. Ah, you may do your best to reformI hope you will, but that will never wash out your past sins. All the waters of the rivers of reformation can never wash away a single blood-red stain of guilt. But, says one, may I, just as I am, believe that my sins are forgiven?

No, but I tell you what you may do. If God help you, you may now cast yourself simply upon the blood and righteousness of Christ. And the moment you do that, your sins are all gone and gone so that they never can return again. He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. He is saved in the moment of his faith. He is no more in the sight of God received as a sinner. Christ has been punished for him. The righteousness of Christ is wrapped about him and he stands accepted in the Beloved.

Well, but, says one, I can believe that a man, after he has been a long time a Christian, may know his sins to be forgiven, but I cannot imagine that I can know it at once. The knowledge of our pardon does not always come the moment we believe, but the fact of our pardon is before our knowledge of it and we may be pardoned before we know it. But if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all yours heart, I will tell you thisif your faith is free of all self-trust you shall know today that your sins are forgiven, for the witness of the Spirit shall bear witness with your heart and you shall hear that secret still small voice, saying, Be of good cheer. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.

Oh, says one, I would give all I have for that. And you might give all you have, but you would not have it at that price. You might give the firstborn for your transgression, the fruit of your body for the sin of your

soul. You might offer rivers of oil and ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts. You will not have it for money, but you may have it for nothing. It is freely brought to you. You are bid to take it. Only acknowledge your sin and put your trust in Christ and there is not one man among you who shall hear anything about his sin in the Day of Judgment. It shall be cast into the depth of the seait shall be carried away forever.

I will give you a picture and then leave this subject. See, there stands the high priest of the Jews. A goat is brought to himit is called the scapegoat. He puts his hands upon the head of this goat and begins to make confession of sin. Will you come and do the like? Jesus Christ is the Scapegoat. Come and lay your hand on His thorn-crowned head by faith and make confession of your sin, as the high priest did of old. Have you done it? Is your sin confessed? Now believe that Jesus Christ is able and willing to take your sin away. Rest wholly and entirely on him. Now what happens? The high priest takes the scapegoat, gives it into the hand of a trusty man, who leads it over hill and down dale, till he is many miles away. And then, suddenly loosing its bonds, he frightens it and the goat flees with all its might. The man watches it till it is gone and he can see it no more. He comes back and he says, I took the scapegoat away and it vanished out of my sight. It is gone into the wilderness.

Ah, my Hearer, and if you have put your sins on Christ by a full confession, remember He has taken them all away, as far as the east is from the west, they are gone and gone eternally. Your drunkenness, your swearing is gone, your lying, your theft is gone, your Sabbath-breaking, your evil thoughts are goneall gone and you shall never see them again

*Plunged, as in a shoreless sea,   
Lost, as in immensity.*

III. And now I conclude by noticing THE BLESSED PRIVILEGES WHICH ALWAYS FOLLOW THE FORGIVENESS WHICH IS GIVEN TO US ACCORDING TO THE GRACE OF GOD.

I think there are a great many people who do not believe there is any reality in religion at all. They think it is a very respectable thing to go to Church and to go to Chapel, but as to ever enjoying a consciousness that their sins are all forgiven, they never think about that. And I must confess that in the religion of these modern times, there does not seem to be much reality. I do not hear at this day that clear, ringing, distinct proclamation of the Gospel that I want to hear.

It is a grand thing to carry the Gospel to all manner of men, to take it to the theater and the like, but we want to have the Gospel undilutedthe milk must have a little less water with it. There must be a more distinct, palpable Truth of God taught to the people, a something that they can really lay hold of, a something that they can understand, even if they will not believe it. I trust no man will misunderstand me this morning in what I have said. There is such a thing as having all our sins forgiven now. There is such a thing as knowing it and enjoying it. Now I will show you what will be the happiness resulting to you, should you obtain this blessing.

In the first place, you will have peace of conscience. That heart of yours that throbs so fast when you are alone will be quite still and quiet. You will be least alone when you are alone. That fear of yours which makes you quicken your step in the dark because you are afraid of something and you do not know what, will all be gone. I have heard of a man who was so constantly in debt and continually being arrested by the bailiffs, that once upon a time, when going by some area railings, having caught his sleeve upon one of the rails, he turned round and said, I dont owe you anything, Sir.

He thought it was a bailiff. And so it is with unforgiven sinners, wherever they are, they think they are going to be arrested. They can enjoy nothing. Even their mirth, what is it, but the color of joy, the crackling of thorns under the pot. There is no solid steady fire. But when once a man is forgiven, he can walk anywhere. He says, to me it is nothing whether I live or die, whether ocean depths engulf me, or whether I am buried beneath the avalanche. With sins forgiven, I am secure. Death has no sting to him. His conscience is at rest. Then he goes a step further. Knowing his sins to be forgiven he has joy unspeakable. No man has such sparkling eyes as the true Christian. A man then knows his interest in Christ and can read his title clear. He is a happy man and must be happy. His troubles, what are they? Less than nothing and vanity. For all his sins are forgiven.

When the poor slave first lands in Canada, it may be he is without a single farthing in his purse and scarcely anything but rags on his back. But he puts his foot on British soil and is free. See him leap and dance and clap his hands, saying, Great God I thank You, I am a free man. So it is with the Christian, he can say in his cottage when he sits down to his crust of breadthank God I have no sin mixed in my cupit is all forgiven. The bread may be dry, but it is not half so dry as it would be if I had to eat it with the bitter herbs of a guilty conscience and with a terrible apprehension of the wrath of God. He has a joy that will stand all weathers, a joy that will keep in all climates, a joy that shines in the dark and glitters in the night as well as in the day.

Then, to go further. Such a man has access to God. Another man with unforgiven sin about him stands afar off and if he thinks of God at all it is as a consuming fire. But the forgiven Christian, looking up to God when he sees the mountains and the hills and rolling streams and the roaring flood, he says, My Father made them all. And he clasps hands with the Almighty across the infinite expanse that sunders man from his Maker. His heart flies up to God. He dwells near to Him and he feels that he can talk to God as a man talks with his friend.

Then another effect of this is that the Believer fears no Hell. There are solemn things in the Word of God, but they do not frighten the believer. There may be a pit that is bottomless, but into that his foot shall never slide. It is true there is a fire that never shall be quenched, but it cannot burn him. That fire is for the sinner, but he has no sin imputed to him, it is all forgiven. The banded host of all the devils in Hell cannot take him there, for he has not a single sin that can be laid to his charge. Daily sinning though he is, he feels those sins are all atoned for. He knows that Christ has been punished in his place and therefore Justice cannot touch him again.

Once more, the forgiven Christian is expecting Heaven. He is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. If death should intervene before that glorious advent, he knows that to him sudden death is sudden glory. And in the possession of a quiet conscience and of peace with God, he can go up to his chamber when the last solemn hour shall come. He can gather up his feet in his bed, he can bid farewell to his Brethren and companions, to his wife and to his children and can shut his eye in peace without a fear that he shall not open them in Heaven.

Perhaps never does the joy of forgiven sin come out more brightly than it does on a dying bed. It has often been my privilege to test the power of religion when I have been sitting by the bedside of the dying. There is a young girl in Heaven now, once a member of this, our Church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage of consumption. Fair and sweetly beautiful she looked and I think I never heard such syllables as those which fell from that girls lips. She had had disappointments and trials and troubles, but all these she had not a word to say about, except that she blessed God for them, they had brought her nearer to the Savior.

And when we asked her whether she was not afraid of dying. No, she said, the only thing I fear, by His grace, is thisI am afraid of living, lest my patience should wear out. I have not said an impatient word yet, Sir, I hope I shall not. It is sad to be so very weak, but I think if I had my choice I would rather be here than be in health, for it is very precious to me. I know that my Redeemer lives and I am waiting for the moment when He shall send His chariot of fire to take me up to Him. I put the question, Have you not any doubts? No, none, Sir, why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ. And have not you any fear about your sins? No, Sir, they are all forgiven, I trust the Saviors precious blood. And do you think that you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die? Not if He leaves me, Sir, but He will never leave me, for He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

There is faith, dear Brothers and Sisters! May we all have it and receive forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.   
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TRUST   
NO. 1978

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 21, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.   
Ephesians 1:12, 13.

IT appears from the preceding verse that the predestinating purpose of God deals not only with salvation as a whole, but with the details of itit includes faith as well as salvation which comes of faith. Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. The trust is appointed as well as the justification the means as well as the end. We are not ordained to be saved apart from faith, but those who are predestinated to eternal life are ordained to receive it through faith in Christ Jesus. What God has joined together let no man put asunder.

Beloved Friends, I would have you notice in this verse the remarkable object which is set before us as the grand design of predestinating Grace. Observe the singular expression of the ApostleThat we should be to the praise of His glory. Observe that He does not say, that we should sing to the praise of our glorious God, though we will do that. Nor that we should suffer to His praise, though we would not refuse to do that. Nor that we should work to His praise, though by Grace we will do thatbutthat we should be to the praise of His glory. The very being of a Believer is to the praise and glory of God! It is written, Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. But this is still more comprehensiveyou are to be to His gloryyour very existence is to praise Him. Your being, which is now turned into well-being, is to glorify the God of Grace! When in the quiet of the garden I have looked upon the lilies standing erect in their marvelous beauty and I have realized our Masters words, that Solomon in all His glory was not arrayed like one of these, shall I have said to myself, What do these do to the glory of God? Quickly my heart has answered, They exist to show forth the glory of their Creator! By merely standing where they are, they yield praise to the Lordtheir very being is worship! Even those flowers which are born to blush unseen of men do not bloom in vain. They do not waste their sweetness, though they pour it on the desert air, for God is in the lone places and beholds with joy His own handiwork. God is glorified by the being of that which He makes and especially by the being of that which He has a second time created by the power of His Grace, according to His purpose through faith! Is it not enough result of being if we are to His praise?

Beloved, see the importance of that trust which is so constant an item in the purpose of God when He causes us to be to the praise of His glory. Unless we have trusted in Christ, we are not living to the praise of God. But when we have come, by faith, into the place wherein we ought to stand, then is our very being unto the praise of His glory! In Christ our very existence glorifies God and it is faith which consciously places us in Christ. Concerning that trust, or, if you will, for the original bears that translationthat hope which is so essential to the fulfillment of the purpose of Godconcerning that trust I am about to speak this morning. May the praise of His glory be promoted by what I am enabled to say!

I. Our first point will be THAT TRUST IN CHRIST IS THE CONSTANT MARK OF THE SAVED. That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ, in whom you also trusted. I care not whether you read it, trusted, or, hoped, the idea will still be the same. Trust in Christ, or hope in Christ, is the distinguishing token of Gods people.

It was the mark of the Apostles . It was necessary to an Apostle that he should have seen the Lord, for he was to bear personal witness to that which he had seen with his eyes and looked upon and handled. But this alone was not sufficient, for many saw the Lord and remained in unbelief, enemies of the Cross of Christ. These could not have been Apostles since they did not trust in Jesus. The Apostles were those who, with an inner as well as an outer eye, had seen the Lord and had trusted themselves wholly to Him as their Leader, Master, Teacher and Savior. There were no Apostles worthy to be called Apostles who did not trust in Christ. Truly Judas bore the name, but his Lord said of him, One of you is a devil. He who is sent of Christ as His witness, first trusts in Christ.

This was also the mark of the first converts, the chosen from among the Jews. These had the honor to be the elder bornthese who first trusted in Christ. Some of them had the advantage of having trusted in Him before His actual advent, for they were looking for the hope of Israel and earnestly expecting the coming of the Messiah. Before our Lord appeared at the waters of Jordan and was pointed out by John the Baptist as, the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, there were hearts that believed in Him and eyes that looked for Him. Still, whether they were Jewish Believers, looking for His advent, or not, this was the mark of their being truly savedthat they trusted in Jesus when He was revealed as the Anointed of the Lord. The best instructed Jew could not find eternal salvation apart from his putting his trust in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Now, dear Friends, this was the mark of those who were first saved by the great Redeemer and I want you to notice how the Holy Spirit sets them in a class by themselves. He makes a distinction between those who first trusted and those who trusted afterwards because it is a noteworthy honor to have been among the first that trusted Christ. It is a privilege to be led by Jesus, to trust Him first in order of time by beginning in your earliest youth. Happy are those who enter the Lords vineyard amid the dews of the morning, for these redeem years of time from the bitter servitude of sin and turn them to blessed account in the delightful service of the Lord Jesus. Such are usually distinguished in the Churchearly piety makes eminent pietyearly consecration often leads to abounding usefulness. The Lord evidently delights to be found in a high degree of those who seek Him early. They come to Him, first, and He remembers the kindness of their youth and the promptness with which they obeyed His call.

It is also a great privilege to be called first out of a family or a neighborhood. Perhaps some of you live where there are none who believe in Christ. May the Lord grant you this high favor to be the leader of your household and your district as a Believer! May the shower of Grace fall first on you and then bless all those who are round about you! Possibly in your family you do not know of one who has passed from death to life may you be the first fruits out of spiritual death! I have often observed that where God begins with a family, He goes on with a family. He makes one or two to be the first fruits and then He considers the lump as also holy and goes on to bless the rest of the household. Even in nations I scarcely remember a nation or people that has ever received Christ which has been quite left without His blessing throughout after centuriesthe fire which the first live coals had kindled has never absolutely been quenched. Therefore, I admire the gray fathers of the past, the pioneers of the army of the Lord.

Paul mentions with respect those who were in Christ before he was and so should we honor those who led the way for us by first trusting in Christ. I greatly esteem in my own mind those first Believers who were not borne in by the throng of others, but went forward alone. I compare them to the first navigators upon an untried seathe men who first sailed out of sight of shore, greatly venturing. To be first in perceiving that Jesus of Nazareth was the Anointed of the Lord was no mean thing, for none of the princes of this world had any idea of that great fact. These were, in truth, the men of light and leading, the foremost minds of their age, though they were peasants and fishermen! These were the first swallows heralding a glorious summer tide. These were the first songbirds waking the morning to behold the newly-risen sun. It is a patent of nobility to be numbered with these!

I would put a holy ambition into the hearts of those who are young and others who belong to ungodly families, suggesting to them that they should be among their households those who first trust in Christ. In the history of your tribe you will have an honored place as the first who brought salvation to your house. But, whether you are first or last, if you are saved at all it will be through trust in Christ! Come young, come old, you will still be saved only by trusting Christ. Come as the leader of your family, or come as the last left out in the coldyou will still have to come by a simple trust and reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ! This is the one and only way of salvation.

Now, as this was the mark of the elder born, the text goes on to tell us that it was the mark of the younger bornIn whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. The Ephesians did not see the Christ, they never listened to the melodious tones of His voice, nor looked into His beloved Countenancethey were converted by hearing the report of Him. They were brought into salvation afterwards, but still it came to the same thingthey received the same precious faith with those who, in former days, had obtained eternal life. Those to whom I now speak trusted in Christ after they had heard the Word of truth. Note the expression. It is the Word of the truththe most important and vital of all truthsthe Truth of God. Nothing but the Truth of God can truly renew the heart. Falsehood works to evilonly the Truth of God works towards righteousness. We heard the Word of the God of Truth and it came to us as the Word of Godit came with the force of truth, carrying conviction with itand it came as the Word of God, exercising a Divine power over our nature and, hence it was that we came to trust in Christ. My unconverted Hearer, if you desire to have faith in Christ, listen to the Truth of God and to the Truth of God, only! Shut your ears to error and hold yourselves only ready to hear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Faith comes by hearing, but that hearing must be the hearing of the Word of God. It is by the hearing of the Word of the Truth of God that men come to trust in Christ, but trust in Christ they must, or they will perish! He is the sole Rock on which we must restthe one Foundation laid for us to build upon.

The Apostle also says to these Ephesians, You heard the Gospel of your salvation. O delightful word! The Gospel, the glad tidings! The glad tidings of salvation! Yes, more, the glad tidings of

your salvation! The Gospel brings to us a personal deliverance. We heard Christ preached and we saw that He had salvation for us. Another mans Savior brings us little joy, but salvation for ourselves is good news, indeed! Joyful was the day when my heart said, Blessed be God, I need salvation and it is joyful tidings to me that there is an atoning Sacrifice by which my sin is put away! I can be reconciled to God through the death of His Son and in Christ Jesus I can be accepted and beloved of the Lord. By such reflections we were led to a simple and hearty trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. That trust is the broad arrow of the King, set upon all His royal possessions. Where that trust is found, that soul is Gods possession! Where it is lacking, that soul still lies in the arms of the Wicked One. This trust, of which some make so little, is, nevertheless, the distinguishing and the discriminating mark by which we must discern between him that fears God and him that fears Him not.

Note, before I leave this portion of the subject, that trust in Christ is of the same nature in all Believers. It is not the same in degree, nor in constancy, nor in energy, but it is the same faith. You received like precious faith, said Peter. Pauls faith and your faith are the same faith if your faith is true faith. The faith of Abraham and the faith of a little child who has newly believed in Jesus are the same faith. A diamond is a diamond whatever its size may be and so, little faith and great faith are of the same essence! Whether it is a grain of mustard seed or a mountain-moving faith, it is still faith of the operation of God, faith in the same Object and faith working to the same end. Therefore John, speaking to his converts, prays, That you may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. If you are a Believer, you have a right to the same fellowship with God as the Apostle had. You have the same perfect cleansing by the precious blood. You have the same adoption, the same regeneration, you stand in the same place of love and acceptanceyou shall be blessed with the same blessings on earthand you shall enter into the same joy at the right hand of God. See, then, dear Friends, that trust in Christ is the invariable and the Infallible mark of the saved ones!

II. Secondly, THIS TRUST IS NO EMPTY NOTION. The trust in Christ which saves the soul is no idle sentiment, but a strong, vital, active principle, having a diving and conquering power within it. It is of the operation of the Spirit of God and, therefore, it is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.

True trust in Christ is an entire reliance upon Him . This day, if you trust Christ, you rest the whole weight and stress of your souls affairs upon Him. Looking at your sin and your sinfulness; looking at the past, the present and the future; looking at death and at judgment, you deliberately believe that Christ is equal to every emergency and you cast yourself entirely and without reserve upon Him to save youand to keep you saved forever! No other trust is worth a pin except this! It must be an absolute severance from all reliance upon your past merit, or upon your present resolutions, or upon your future expectations of what you shall be or shall do. You must have done with all other trust if Christ is your confidence. Your motto must be, Jesus only. In this lifeboat you must swim to Glory, but all others you must cast away. Another reliance would be as a weight about your loins to sink you in the sea of despair. O my Hearer, have you such a simple, unadulterated trust as this?

A saving trust leads us to accept Christ in all His offices . He is to us not only Priest to put away our sin, but Prophet to remove our ignorance and King to subdue our rebellions. If as Priest He purges the conscience, as Prophet He must direct the intellect and as King He must rule the life. We must yield our will to Christs will that henceforth every thought may be brought into captivity to His holy sway. There is no whole-hearted trust in Christ unless Christ is taken as a whole! You cannot have half a Christ and be saved, for half Christ is no Christ! You must take Him as He is revealed in ScriptureJesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior of men, very God of very God, the faithful and true Witness, your Guide, your Lord, your Husband, your everything! Do you trust Him so? If not, you have not trusted Him at all! This is the trust which brings salvation with itan entire reliance upon an entire Savior so far as you know Him.

This trust includes obedience to Him we have not trusted Him at all unless we are prepared to accept His commands as the rule of our lives. The ship is on fire; the bales of cotton are pouring forth a black, horrible smoke; passengers and crew are in extreme danger, but a capable captain is in command and he says to those around him, If you will behave yourselves, I think I shall be able to effect the escape of you all. Now, if they trust in the captain they will do precisely as he orders. No sailor or engineer will refuse to work the pumps, or to prepare the boats. Neither will any passenger disobey a rule. In proportion to their confidence in their leader will be the alacrity with which they obey him at once. They believe his orders to be wise and so they keep to then. Neither their fear, nor their rashness will lead them to rush to and fro contrary to his bidding if they have a firm trust in him. When the boats are lowered and are bought, one by one, to the ships side, those who are to fill them wait till their turns comein firm reliance upon the captains impartiality and prudence they will get into the boats or they will wait on boardfor they consider that his orders are dictated by a better judgment than their own. So far as each man and each woman firmly believes in the superior officer, discipline will be maintained. Do you not see this?

Obedience is the necessary outcome of true and real faith and there is no trust where there is no obedience. Some of you fancy that you are to trust Christ and then do what you like! You believe a lie, for such is not the teaching of Gods Word! The faith which saves is a faith which obeys. Learn this from the sermon of last Sabbath morning [The Blind Beggar of the Temple and His Wonderful CureSermon #1977.] Jesus becomes the Physician of the blind man and puts clay on his eyes. And then He bids him go and wash in the pool of Siloam and he shall see. If he had refused to go and wash, he would not have received sight. Do not tell me you have trusted for sightyou cannot have done so unless you go and wash in the appointed pool. We must follow Christs directions if we would receive Christs promises. Trust in Christ implies a yielding up of all that we have and all that we are into Christs hands. We must be to Him as the wax to the seal, or the clay to the potter. There must be an unreserved submission to His supremacy. O you seeking Sinner, will you submit to this? Are you full of self-will and pride? Then these must be taken from you! If you heartily accept the Lord Jesus as your Lord and King, you have the faith which saves. But if not, what faith have you that is worth having?

Trust in Christ leads to an open following of Him . Trust is not lame, but it walks in the footsteps of him it relies upon. If the Lords way is the way of the Cross, you will, nevertheless, follow it because you will know it to be the right way, since He leads therein. He that is ashamed to confess Christ has good reason to fear that he is not trusting Him. How can I be trusting Him of whom I am ashamed? If I am not on His side in the great battle of life, how can I say that He is my confidence? He declares that he that is not with Him is against Him. How can I trust Him and yet be against Him? If I refuse to have my name recorded on the muster-roll of His army below, how dare I hope that it is written in the Lambs Book of Life above? If I refuse to accept Jesus as my Captain, how can I claim Him as my Savior? A hearty trust in Christ involves an honest confession of Him. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved. Thus the matter is put in Scripture. Will you come out, then? Will you come out on His side? If you will, then you have saving trust. If you will truly, fully and wholly decide for Christ and live for Christ, then you have the trust which is the mark of His elect!

This trust will lead a man to labor to suffer for Christ as need occurs . The true truster considers it to be real gain to lose for Jesus. He reckons that toil unrewarded of men is the best rewarded form of labor when it is accepted of the Lord. It is enough wage to be permitted to serve the Lord Christ! This is faiththis which counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. Faith is that which has respect unto a future recompense when the Lord shall come in His Kingdom, but looks not for honor among men or any other form of reward here below. True trust cleaves to Christ when the many turn aside, for it knows that He has the Living Word and none upon earth beside. My Hearer, if you have a real trust in Christ, you will follow His teachings though all the world should run madly after new opinions! You will stand by His Truth though you are called a fool for your steadfastness and you will not be ashamed though no one should keep you in countenance. If you are trusting in Christ, you will spend your life for Him and reckon it to be the best way of using your existence. God grant us to have more and more of this trust!

That trust which lives on mens lips and never affects their hearts is a deadly delusion. He that says, I believe, and then never lives according to that belief, is a deceiver and will find himself deceived if he looks for salvation in such a faith. That presumptuous trust which indulges in sin and boasts of forgiveness in Christ is, in itself, an aggravation of a sinful life and will involve its possessor in increased condemnation. Hang up on the gallows of infamy that evil confidence which is in league with unholiness! The conceit of safety while we love sin is a mockery of Gods salvationthe base counterfeit of the coin of Heaven! Only God gives the faith which works by love and purifies the soulall other faith is spurious and ruinous.

True trust rejoices in the hope which Christ inspires . It looks for His coming and His Glory, His reign and His Heaven. It is full of hopethat living, lively, life-giving hope which sustains the heart! This trust has a window of hope through which light comes into the heart in the darkest hours. It lives and triumphs in the future through trusting the promise of Christ Jesus.

If we have such trust as this, we shall constantly meet with something whereon to exercise it. God never leaves true trust without work to do. It is not a presentation sword to be worn only on high days and holidays, neither is it like the old armor in the Tower of London, hung up to be looked at. No, true trust is for everyday wear and useand between here and Heaven it will be tested in every conceivable way! That sword will snap if it is not a true Jerusalem blade and that armor will be pierced if it is not of proof, able to endure the battleaxe of fierce temptation. In a thousand fields our trust will be tried before we shall be able to sheathe the sword and enjoy the triumph! It is in this way that trust in Christ is made by our God to work to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Trust in Christ brings to God greater glory than anything else we can produce.

What shall we do, said one, that we may work the work of God?

Meaning thereby a God-like work, a work so great as to bear a heavenly name. Jesus answered, This is the work of God, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Dear Friend over yonder, you cannot build a row of almshouses to the glory of God, but you can trust Christ with all your heart to the Glory of God! You cannot stand up and deliver an eloquent oration to Gods praise, but you can, by Divine Grace, pursue a life of faith and thus praise Him! You cannot be a hero in fight and turn to flight the armies of the alien, but by trust in Jesus, exercised in prevailing prayer, you can win great victories to the praise of His glory! Walk humbly with your God! In patience possess your souls and with an unstaggering faith embrace the promisesand you shall be found in that cloud of witnesses who are ennobled of God Most High! The Lord grant us, then, to have this trust which is more than mere notion or sentimentbut a Divine principle created by the Holy Spirit.

III. Thirdly, THIS TRUST IN CHRIST IS HIS DUE. There came to me the other day a young man who wished to speak with me about his soul troubles and he began thus, Dear Sir, I cannot trust Christ. To which I answered, Have you found out something new in His Character? Has He ceased to be trustworthy? Pray let me know all about it, for it is a serious matter to me. I have trusted Him with everything I have for time and for eternityand if He is not fit to be trusted, I am in terrible shape. He looked at me and he said, I will not say that again, Sir, I see I have made a mistake. Truly the Lord Jesus is in every way trustworthy. Well, then, I said, Why cannot you trust Him? I left Him with that unanswerable question. A man is certainly able to trust one whom he regards as trustworthy! My young friend saw that at once and asked me further. But may I trust Christ to save me? Am I permitted to trust my soul with Him? I said to him, Is not this the command of the GospelBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved? And are you not warned that if you do not believe in Him you will be damned? How can we doubt that we are permitted to do that which is commanded us of the Lord? I am to preach the Gospel to every creatureand this is the GospelBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!

He said, So, then, if I trust Christ, He will save me? And I replied, Certainly He will! He is the Savior of all them that put their trust in Him. He says, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. It is written, He that believes on Him has everlasting life. He that trusts in Jesus is saved. He thanked me and, saying that he had found out the secret, he went on his way rejoicing! I told Him the Gospel; he received it and he entered into rest. I hope I may be equally successful with my Hearers at this time. May the Holy Spirit work with me in this case, also! I have been talking about faith and I trust I have not darkened counsel by words without knowledge. It is simplicity, itself, but we are exceedingly apt to becloud it. To trust Christ is to find salvation! He that sincerely relies upon Jesus is saved! Now, concerning this trust, I say that this is our Lords due.

Observe, first, that we are bound to trust Him from His very name. His name is, Christ, that is, the Anointed. God has sent Him. God has commissioned Him. God has equipped Him. He is the Anointed of God dare I distrust Him? An Ambassador from Heaven, with the Divine warrant at His back, known to speak in the name of the Lord God, how dare I say I have no confidence in Him? By the glorious name of Christ I claim for Him that you who seek salvation should trust Him implicitly and trust Him at once!

Remember, next, His glorious Person. He who is set forth as the Object of saving trust is none other than the Son of God! In His Godhead and in His Humanity, yes, in His undivided Person, He claims your trust. Can you not trust Him that made Heaven and earth, without whom was not anything made that was made? Can His power fail you? Can His wisdom mislead you? Can His mind change toward you? Can He be unfaithful? The Son of the Highestcan you not trust Him? Away with the impertinence of mistrust! Can you doubt the Holy and the True? Dare you doubt the Lamb of God? Be not so foolhardy as thus to defy the Incarnate Son of God and treat Him as though He could deceive you!

Next, trust Him because of His matchless Character. Have you ever heard of such another as the Christ of God? Among the sons, no one is like He

*All hail, Emmanuel, all Divine,   
In You, Your Fathers glories shine!   
You brightest, sweetest, fairest One   
That eyes have seen or angels known.*

He is all goodness, the fullness of love and the pattern of tenderness. He is always true and always faithful. By that blessed Character which He bears, which I am sure you would not, for a moment, questiona Character which even infidels have been forced to admireI pray you trust Him! Let it not be a question with you, How can I trust Him? Say, rather, How can I distrust Him? What reason can you have for doubt? What excuse for mistrust?

Remember next, His work and especially His death. Here is immovable ground for my claim that you should trust Him. Jesus loved men so as to die for themhow can we doubt His love? I do not know how it is with you, but I lose the power to doubt when I realize Christ Crucified. That crown of thorns hedges my mind around and shuts out mistrust. His five wounds kill my suspicions and my fears. A crucified Savior is the life of faith and the death of unbelief. Can you stand and view the flowing of the Saviors precious blood upon the tree of doom and not trust Him? What more can He do to prove His sincerity than to die for us? His life is the mirror of love, but in His death the sun shines on it with a blaze of Glory so that we cannot steadily look into its brightness! Behold how He loved us! Oh, believe in the Crucified Christ, for this is no more than His right and due!

Besides, He lives and He has gone up into Glory with the same purpose of Grace upon His heart. When men change their places, they often change their minds. But He that loved us when He was despised and rejected, loves us now that He is highly exalted. He is not like the chief butler who forgot in the palace the promise which he made in the prison. The love of Calvary is with the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God! On earth He bleeds, in Heaven He pleads. You Sinners, come and trust the ever-living Christ, for He makes intercession for transgressors! I stand here this morning and I say to all of you in this house, that I claim your confidence in the Lord Jesus! I do not humbly ask for it as a beggar asks for almsI demand, for the Christ of Godthat you put your trust in Him! God has set Him forth to be a Propitiation for sin, that through faith in His blood everyone that believes in Him should be saved. I demand your trust in the name of God! Christ deserves it at your hands and you cannot refuse it without doing Him a gross injustice!

I beseech you, do not make God a liar, yet, according to the Apostle John, He that believes not has made Him a liar because he believes not in the Son of God. If Christ were here this morning, standing on this platform, and you saw His pierced hands and the wound in His side, you would be ready to fall down and worship Him! You can worship Him better, still, by trusting Him in His absence! Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed. Trust is among the most sublime forms of adoration. A childlike, tearful, broken-hearted, sincere trust in Christ is a hallelujah unto His name. If you would crown Him, you need not go far for a coronetyour trust is the best diadem you can bring Him!

Trust Him, then, at this moment, and thus bow at His feet with cherubim and seraphim. But again I say, do not insult Him by saying that you cannot trust Him. I should think it hard if any of my acquaintances said to me, Sir, I cannot trust you. It would be a cruel cut. I would enquire of him, What have I done to merit this? When have I been untrue? It would be too unkind a stab if it came from one whom I had aimed to benefit. Do not crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame!

O my Hearers, I have chosen an old theme this morning and I have been studiously simple in my style, for my heart longs to bring you to trust in Jesus! I have no desire to be thought a fine preacherI want to save your souls! This trust is the vital pointdo not slight it. Oh that you would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! If you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved! This is the way of salvation and it is very plain. God help you to run in it! Lay aside pride and self-confidenceand trust wholly in Jesusand this will be better than all tears, despairs, resolves and efforts! Fall back into the arms of redeeming love. Lean your whole weight on Jesus. Take your soul to Christ as you take your money to your bankerand leave it in His hands. He will keep it until that day when, at His appearing, you shall appear with Him in Glory!

IV. I close by noticing, in the fourth place, what I have already insisted upon, that THIS TRUST IS, IN EVERY CASE, THE INSTRUMENT OF SALVATION.

Trust is selected by God as the instrument of salvation and it is not selected arbitrarily, but with great wisdom and prudence. When a man trusts Christ, by his trust he is brought into mental and spiritual contact with Christand there is a more hopeful influence about that contact than in anything which a man will resolve to do or ever perform in his own strength. It is a grand thing for a man to be elevated above self-confidence and brought to rely upon such an One as the Son of God. Thus he is made to feel that he must look to such an One greater and better than himselfand he is brought to acknowledge that he is a feeble and dependent creature. I think I see in this consideration an adaptation in faith to be the means chosen of God in the matter of salvation.

Moreover, faith is no doubt selected by God to be the means of salvation because it never robs God of His Glory. If you and I are to be saved, we shall be saved by God and by His Grace, alone! Now, if the appointed way of salvation leaves something for us to do in order that we may be saved by God, we shall, in all probability, attribute our salvation to that something and forget the Lord. If we are bid to trust, there will be no temptation in that direction, for we cannot rely upon our trust since its very essence lies in depending upon Christ, alone. Trust ascribes salvation to Him who saves. Faith never seeks honor for herselfshe is a self-denying Grace. Christ says, Your faith has saved you; go in peace. And by this saying, He crowns faith and He does so because faith crowns Him.

Trust, again, is selected as the instrument of salvation because it has wonderful power over the heart of God. Marvelous is the influence of trust. I have in the past illustrated this to you by the power which faith has over us mortal men. I will venture to tell you an old story which you have heard from me before. I cannot remember anything better and you must bear with the repetition. I once lived where my neighbors garden was only divided from me by a very imperfect hedge. He kept a dog, and his dog was a shockingly bad gardener and did not improve my beds. So one evening, while I walking alone, I saw this dog doing mischief and, being a long way off, I threw a stick at him, with some earnest advice as to his going home. This dog, instead of going home, picked up my stick and came to me with it in is mouth, wagging his tail. He dropped the stick at my feet and looked up at me most kindly. What could I do but pat him and call him a good dogand regret that I had ever spoken roughly to him? Why, it brings tears into my eyes as I talk about it! The dog mastered me by his trust in me! The illustration is to the point. If you will trust God as that dog trusted me, you will overcome! God will be held by your trust in such a way that He could not smite you, but must accept you for Jesus sake! If you do trust Him, you have the key of His heart, the key of His house, the key of His Heaven! If you can trust your God in Jesus Christ, you have become a son of God! I see a philosophy in the choice of faithdo not you?

But then faith operates, also, to salvation by the effect it has on the character. When I doubt God, then I follow my own judgment and do what I please. But when I trust Him wholly and know Him to be my Father and my Friend, then I naturally yield my will to Himnot as a matter of constraint, but with great joy! And is it not a wonderful thing that this simple trust turns the whole current of our life and changes the entire color and complexion of our thought? Wisely is it ordained to be the instrument of salvation, since it touches the mainspring of our being and makes that which was erratic and rebellious become orderly and obedient!

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, trust saves us, because it grasps the promises of God and pleads them. It says to God, You have promised this, therefore I pray You do as You have said. The God of Truth cannot lie and, therefore, He must keep His Word. Trust pleads the Sacrifice of Jesus and saysLord, the blood of Your Son was shed for the remission of sins, therefore, I pray You let my sins be remitted. You have said that You have laid on Him the iniquity of us all. I pray You let me be unburdened of my load because You have laid it on Him. Trust must save, for it has all the promises of the Covenant at its back and the Christ of the Covenant at its side, exhibiting His own precious blood! How can trust but save the soul when God declares it shall do so?

In our most honest hours we are driven to faith for our comfort . If in our prosperity our eyes wander to other confidencesin our distress they come back to Christ and His Cross. When the head is aching, the heart is throbbing and the death-sweat lies on the brow, none of us dare look to works, or feelings, or sacraments! We cry

*Hold You Your Cross before my failing eyes.* The wounds of Jesus are the ultimate hope of the forlorn! When the soul is about to quit the body, the most eminent preacher, the most earnest worker, the most devout thinker asks that he may see Jesus and be washed in His blood and covered with His righteousness. I dare not trust all the heaped up merits of all the saints, but I dare trust the Lord Jesus Christ! Sinner as I am, I am assured of salvation through the sinners Savior. If I had as many souls in this one body as there are souls in this House of Prayer, I dare trust them all with Christ! If all the sins ever committed by all the men that ever lived since time began were all heaped upon my one guilty headI dare trust Jesus Christ to cleanse me from

them all!

O come, dear Hearts, and trust my Lord! He cannot fail you! According to your faith be it unto you. You shall be able to live graciously and to die calmly if your trust settles itself upon Jesus, the Christ, the Anointed of the Lord! Before the harvest is past and the summer is ended, trust Christ and live! O Holy Spirit, by Your secret workings upon the heart, lead all these thousands to trust in the Lord Jesus! Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 1.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK909, 531, 559.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #592 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TRUE POSITION OF ASSURANCE   
NO. 592

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 2ND, 1864, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also   
after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Ephesians 1:13.

MANY sincerely seeking souls are in great trouble because they have not yet attained to an assurance of their interest in Christ Jesusthey dare not take any comfort from their faith because they suppose that it has not attained to a sufficient strength. They have believed in the Lord Jesus and they have His promise that they shall be saved, but they are not content with thisthey want to get assurance and then they suppose they shall have a better evidence of their salvation than the bare word of the Savior.

Such persons are greatly mistaken. But as that mistake is a very painful one, and exercises the most injurious influence upon them, we will spend this morning in trying, as God shall help us, to clear up their difficulty. We want them to see that if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, even though they should not have attained to the precious Grace of full assurance of faith, yet nevertheless they are saved! And being justified by faith, they may rightfully enjoy peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Their mistake seems to me to be thisthey look for ripe fruit upon a tree in spring and because that season yields nothing but blossoms, they conclude the tree to be barren. They go to the head of a riverthey find it a little rippling brook, and because it will not float a Great Eastern, they conclude that it will never reach the sea, and that, in fact, it is not a true part of the river at all. They look upon themselves as being little children and such they arebut because they cannot speak plainly on account of having been so newly born, they therefore conclude that they are not the children of God at all!

They see strong men in Christ Jesus performing great exploits. And because they, as yet, are but young and feeble, they conclude that they are not in the family of Grace. They compare themselves with giants in the Church of God and then, because they rightly perceive the difference between themselves and these mighty ones, they imagine that they are not savedthat they cannot be numbered among the faithful and have no part nor lot in this matter. They put the last things first. They make comforts essentials. They consider that which is the fruit of Grace to be the root of Grace. And herein they pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

Perhaps they will not fall into this error again if they get a right understanding of the text before us. The Apostle Paul here explains the process by which sealingthe sealing of assuranceis obtained. There are three

steps by which the hallowed elevation is reached. The first is hearing they heard first the preaching of the Word. The second is believing. And then, thirdly, after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

I. To begin then, faith comes by HEARING. The preaching of the Gospel is Gods soul-saving ordinance. It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. In every age God raises up men who faithfully proclaim His Word and, as he departs, another arrives. Elijah ascends to Glory, but his mantle falls upon Elisha. Paul dies not until Timothy is in the field. This true Apostolic succession is continued evermore, for when we know not where to find ministers, we may rest assured that in nooks and corners the Lord is preparing men for His work.

The true preacher has a claim upon mens attention. If God has sent him, men should receive him. If he comes as an ambassador from the King of kings, let his commission be proved and he has a right to receive the careful and prayerful attention of all who come in his way. No, more Gods true ambassador not only claims a hearing, but he wins itfor there is an attractiveness in his theme which holds men by the ears! I, if I am lifted up, said Christ, will draw all men unto Me, and among the other drawings there is this peculiar fact that men are drawn to hear where Christ is preached!

He who preaches Christ has golden chains coming from his mouth with which he binds mens ears, if not their hearts. They are not all bound to salvation, but bound somehow they shall bethe savor shall go forth even though it should be a savor of death unto death and not of life unto life. The preacher claims a hearing and he wins it! What is that message which we are to hear in order to the attaining of faith, and, through faith, of full assurance?

Our text is very expressive, for it tells us, You heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation. It is of little use to hear that which is not the Word of Truthno, it is worse than uselessfor by error we shall soon be misled. And if the preaching is not concerning the Word of Truth, even though it should be a word of truth, yet it can be of no value to the getting of faithit must be the Wordthe Word peculiarly above all others having the Truth of God and substance in it. There is no doubt that the expression here is a Hebraism for, the true Word, you heard the true Word.

O Brothers and Sisters, how joyous it is for us to know Gods Word to be true! We have proved it in our own souls and thus can bear our witness to you concerning it. If we speak not according to the true Word of God, reject us, for that which will bless you must have a, Thus says the Lord, to support it and must be based upon the Revelation of the Most Highotherwise it cannot be of saving service, seeing it is not the Word which is infallibly true!

No doubt that the expression signifies the highest truth, truth as much the truth among other truths, as the Bible is the book above all other books. What I must hear for my salvation is not an important doctrine which may or may not be believed, but the Word without which men must perish in their sins. We may also remind you that the Word of Truth is a phrase peculiar to the contradistinction to the Law. Compare the Revelation of Christ with that of MosesMoses revealed much Gospel Truth, but it was in shadows, not by a plain word of teachingand therefore we now declare that the Law was given by Mosesbut Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

Christ is the Substance of all those shadows which Moses had to bring before the peoples minds. And therefore there is an emphasis about the Gospel as being not metaphorical Truth, but solid Truththe essential Truth of God. As the mountain towers high above the surrounding plain, so the great Truth that, God was made flesh and dwelt among usthe faithful saying that, Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save sinnerstowers above all other Truths of God and demands our first and our best thoughts. And as the sun outshines all other lights, even so the manifestation of Truth in the Gospel of Christ excels all other Revelations. It is the Word of Truth.

But the text also adds, the Gospelthe Gospel of your salvation. You are to listen to the Gospelto that which is good newsto a something totally new to the worlds natural religiona something which came fresh from GodGods great noveltysomething goodgood in the deepest senseinfinitely goodgood for your souls best interestsgood in answering the craving appetite of your poor hungry spirit. It must be good newsit must be evangelical doctrine to which you must listen if you would get faith!

Faith does not come by seeing. Men do not get faith by looking at a priest manipulating bread and wine, or sprinkling drops of baptismal water. The symbols of the Church of Rome do not beget faith. They may beget attention. They may please the fancy and delight the taste, but they do not beget the faith of Gods elect. It is the Gospelthe Gospel preached and heard which does this through the power of the Holy Spirit! We do not get faith through ordinancesno matter if God Himself prescribed them. They are not the channel through which faith comes. The Apostle expressly declares that, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

It is not through eye-gate, but through ear-gate, that salvation comes to us. God may, and doubtless does, infuse Grace into us by channels other than the sense of hearing. But, at any rate, the usual way in which Grace comes streaming into the soul is by hearingand that is the hearing of the Gospelnot the hearing of tradition! Not the hearing of supposition! Not the hearing of poetic imaginations, but the hearing of that old evangel, which was first proclaimed by Jesus on the Mount and afterwards by His Apostles and to this day is still proclaimed with trumpet-tongue by those who know its quickening power!

You must hear the Gospeland observe it is called the Gospel of your salvation. You will never get faith, dear Friends, unless you look upon the Gospel as the great means of salvation and come earnestly enquiring and desiring that it may be made to you the Gospel of your salvation! Not of another mans, but of your salvation. I cannot say to every unconverted man, This Gospel will save you, but I can say thisif you receive this

Gospel, it certainly willand that the moment it is accepted by the heart it is the Gospel of your salvation.

Reject itit will be a savor of death unto death to you! But if the Holy Spirit shall come with it and command your will and win your assent and consent, then it is, indeed, the Gospel of your salvation. Are you a sinner? Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Inasmuch as this is worthy of all acceptance, it is worthy of your acceptance and is, in a sense, even now the Gospel of your salvation! We know that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Are you lost? Then in a sense it is the Gospel of your salvation, seeing that you are lost. If you can grasp that cheering Word with the hand of faith, you will say, Yes, lost as I am, I believe Christ came to save the lost and I trust Him alone to save me. Then it is the Gospel of your salvation in a very high and special sense, seeing that now you have been saved by it!

The great end, it seems to me, of the preaching of the Gospel is just thisthe preacher should always be aiming so to preach it that he may find out those souls to whom this is the Gospel of their salvationso laboring to bring it home, both by persuading by the terrors of the Law and by the love of Jesus! Then men shallthrough the Spirit of God accompanying the Wordbe led, through hearing, to lay hold upon Christ and so to be saved! Thus I have set forth what you have to hear.

May I beg you carefully to judge every preacher, not by his gifts, not by his elocutionary powers, not by his status in society, not by the respectability of his congregation, not by the prettiness of his Church, the grandeur of the ceremonies, or the peculiar beauty of his vestments, but by thisdoes he preach the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation? If he does, your sitting under his ministry may prove to you the means of getting faith. But if he does not, you cannot expect Gods blessing, for you are not using Gods ordinance but the ordinance of man.

The hearing of the Gospel involves the hearer in responsibility. It is a great privilege to hear the Gospel. You may smile and think there is nothing very great in it. The damned in Hell know! Oh, what would they give if they could hear the Gospel nowif they could come back and entertain but a shadow of a hope that they might yet escape from the wrath to come? The saved in Heaven estimate this privilege at a high rate, for, having obtained salvation and eternal life through the preaching of this Gospel, they can never cease to bless their God for calling them by His Word of Truth.

O that you knew it! On your dying beds the listening to a Gospel sermon will seem another thing than it seems now. Now you may come out of curiosity, and go away and forget it. But when grim Death and you shall stand face to face, you will find it quite another thing to have had Gods Word spoken to you and you will hear such a word as this, You stumbled at the Word because you were disobedient and therefore woe has come upon you to the uttermost. I must also add that if hearing is really so gracious an ordinance, it becomes Christian men and women to pray the Lord to send forth laborers into His vineyardto entreat Him to bless all efforts used to train our young ministers for future conflict.

I beg you not to forget to aid our Pastors College both with your gifts and your prayers! It should bring afresh to the thoughts of all of you the duty of praying for those who are engaged in preaching the Word, for their preaching is nothing, except as the Spirit goes with it. And though, when the Spirit goes with it the shout of the King is heard in our camps, let Him withdraw and there is nothing but disappointment and dismay in the hosts of God. Pray for us, Brethren!

We trust we have a good conscience and endeavor to free ourselves of the blood of souls. We want our hearers to pray for us and hold up our hands as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses on the mount. Be diligent in hearing the Word. If you are saved, still listen to it for your souls health. If you are not saved, neglect no opportunities of listening. Lie at this pool of Bethesdawho can tell but you may yet step in when the angel does move the watersor Jesus Himself may come and walk through those five porches and bid you take up your bed and walk?

Waste no Sunday in going where you cannot hear the Gospel! And when you hear the Gospel, hear it with all your earsgive your whole soul to itas the thirsty earth drinks in the descending showers, so drink in the Word of God! As new-born babes receive the unadulterated milk of the Word, so receive that which is able to save your souls! And through hearing may faith come and through faith may you gain the assurance which you so earnestly desire.

II. After hearing came BELIEF. We know that believing does not always immediately follow hearing. There is a case told of Mr. Flavel having preached a sermon which was blessed to a man, I think eighty-five years afterwards, so that the seed may lay long buried in dust! Yet, had not that man heard that sermon, speaking after the manner of men, he had not received the quickening Word of God!

You may have heard the Gospel long in vain and it should be to you a source of very serious enquiry if you have done soit should set you trembling lest the Word should never be the savor of life unto you. But at the same time do not renounce the hearing because up to now you have had no blessing, for faith comes by hearing. Continue to listen! Continue to search the Word. And if your soul desires faith, God denies not faith to any in whom He has really implanted a desire after it. Faith will yet, we trust, come while you are hearing. This belief, you observe, is called trusting. Kindly look at the verseIn whom you also trusted.

The translators have borrowed that word, trusted, very properly, from the twelfth verse. Do not, because you see it in italics, think that it is not properly there. It is not in the original, but being in the twelfth verse it is very rightly understood here. Believing, then, is trusting. If you want it summed up in the shortest word, it is just thistrusting Christ. A message comes to me upon good authorityI believe it. Believing it, I necessarily trust it. My receiving of the message is so far good, but the essential act, the act essential to salvation is the trustingthe trusting Christ.

The process of faith may be thus illustrated. You know a friend of yours to be perfectly reliableyou are in debt. He tells you that if you will trust him to pay the debt, he will give you, on the spot, a receipt for it. Now you look at him. You consider his ability to pay it. You consider the probability that he means what he is saying. Having once made up your mind that

he is truthful, you could not then say, I cannot believe you. If you once know that person to be truthful, I utterly deny that you can hold any argument about your power to believe him!

So, if Jesus Christ declares that He came into the world to save sinners, and, if He tells me, as He does tell me, that whosever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal lifeif I am already enabled by Gods Spirit to believe in the perfect truthfulness of Christ, I should be lying unto my own soul if I said I had not power to believe in Him. Understand, power to believe in Christ is the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit has given that power to all men who know the perfect truthfulness of Christ.

It must be so, if you just look at it for a momentit must be so. If I know the perfect truthfulness of a man, I lie if I say to him, I cannot believe you. Why, it follows, as a matter of course that I must believe if I am convinced that he is worthy of credit. Just so, when I am assured of Christ that His Testimony is worthy of my beliefI have no right, then, to plead that I cannot believe Him. Mark, I am only speaking to those who have got as far as that and there are hundreds of you who have! When you tell me you cannot believe, I reply, My dear Friend, you can believe. In the Holy Spirits giving you enough enlightenment to know that Christ is faithful and true, that enlightenment is your power to believe!

And this is according to the rules of common sense as well as according to the rules of experience. Do not stand, therefore, and say, I cannot believe what Christ says. Do you believe Him to be true? Yes, you say, I dare not say otherwise. Then you can believe what He says. But do you really believe that Christ is true? I fear you do not. I believe that John discovered the secret of your unbelief when he said, He that believes not has made God a liar, because he has not believed on His Son. That is the bottom line.

You really think God is a liar! Do you shrink from that charge? Ah, but I must bring it against you again, for if you know God to be true, I insist upon it and your own reason tells you it is sothat you cannot help believing in a person you know to be true! I fear that you are making God a liar. And if you deny that charge, then I arrest you at the other point at once and demand of you that you do now exercise faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ! It is trusting Christ that saves the soul!

Now a few remarks about believing. Faith in Christ is the work of Gods Holy Spirit. In proof of this we have many Scriptures. No man ever did yet believe in Christ until the Holy Spirit had quickened him and illuminated his understanding so that he perceived the truthfulness of Christs Character and was then led to trust Him. But in the next place, although faith is the work of the Spirit, it is the act of man. The Holy Spirit does not believe for methere is nothing for Him to believe! Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not repentHe has nothing to repent of. He works in me to will and to do, but I will and I doHe does not will nor do what I ought to will and do.

If I have a person here who is ignorant and I teach himwhen he acquires knowledge, that knowledge is my gift to him and my work in him. At the same time he acquires that knowledge himself, and it would never have been his if he had not yielded up his faculties to be taught. Man believes. And whenever persons say to you, Well, if it is the work of the Holy Spirit, how can it be the duty of man? remind them that while it is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is not the act of the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit does not believeit is the man who believes.

The Spirit moves upon us and by His mysterious agency takes away the natural unbelief of the soul and then we believe. But man is not passive in the act of believing. A dead man does not believethe man is quickened and then his quickened spirit lays hold of the revealed Truth of God. Observe this, further, that faith is due to Christ. The faithful and true witness demands of me that I should believe what He says. Sinner, this is the unkindest cut you can give to Christto doubt Him. I tell you that all His sufferings on the tree did not insult Him so much as when you say, I cannot trust You.

What? Not trust the eternal arm on which the earth hangs? Not trust the bleeding hands which have opened the gates of Heaven for the very chief of sinners? Not trust the streaming side out of which there gushes blood and water to cleanse the guilt and the power of sin? Not trust Gods own Son, the Mighty God, the Redeemer of Men? It is due to Him that you should, with your whole heart, lean upon Him and give Him all your confidence. This faith is essential to salvation. Assurance is not essential, but no man can be saved unless he trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. You may get to Heaven with a thousand doubts and fearsyou may get to Heaven without some of those Graces of the Spirit which are the ornaments of the Believers neck! But you cannot get there without the life-giving Grace of faith.

You must have that and so long as you continue to say, I will not trust Christ. I want dreams, visions, experiences, revelations. I want terrors of conviction. I want this, I want the otherso long you shut yourself out of peace. Till you set your seal to Gods Word, God will never set His seal to your faith. Remark, again, this faith is not required in any particular degree. In order to salvation, it is not declared in Scripture that you are to believe to a certain strengthif you have faith as small as a grain of mustard seedif that is a mountain-moving faith, surely it shall be a soulsaving faith!

Faith is not to be estimated by its quantity but by its quality. If you have no more faith than a smoking flax has of fire, yet He will not quench youif you have no more power of faith than a bruised reed has of strength, yet He will not break you! If you are not a man, but an infant in Graceno, if you are scarcely a healthy infant, if there is but faith in you, though you are cast out as unswaddled and unwashedyet He passes by and looks upon you! Can you but trust Him? THAT is the thing. If you do but trust Him as a drowning man clutches a rope. If you look to Jesus, as it were, out of the corner of your eye, though there are so many tears in your eyes that you cannot see Him so completely as you desirethough you cannot see Him at all to your comfortyet you see Him to salvation! If you have received Him, desire great faith, but remember that little faith will carry you to Heaven through Jesus Christ.   
Observe, further, that this faith is very variable, but it is not perishable. Faith may go to an ebb, as the tide does, but it will come to a flood again. When faith is at its flood, the man is not, therefore, more saved! And when faith is at its ebb, the man is not, therefore, less saved! For, after all, salvation does not lie in faith, but in Christ. And faith is but the connecting link between the soul and Christ. Faith may take Christ up in its arms, like Simeon, and it is true faith. But, on the other hand, faith may only venture to touch the hem of Jesus garment and that faith makes men whole.

Some of us can look the Savior in the face and even kiss Him with the kisses of our mouth and others may only venture to come behind Him in the throng, all timid and afraidbut faith, if it is faith, let it change as it maystill saves. Faithif it is faithlet it sink as it may, never can drownit may live in the flames, but it shall never be burned. He who once gets this incorruptible seed, shall find it lives and abides in him forever. This faith is worked in us by the Spirit of God, according to the laws of the mind.

When God works upon matter, He works according to the laws of matter. I do not find, apart from miracles, that God violates gravitationthat He breaks any of the great laws with which He has stamped matter. And when the Spirit of God comes to work on man, He does not break the laws with which He regulates the mind. Now, it seems to be one of the laws of the mind that a man should believe a thing not by trying to believe it, but by force of

evidence. If you now sit down, for instance, and try to believe in the explosion of the powder magazines yesterdayif you have any doubt about it, you may try, as long as you like, to believe ityou cannot do it by trying. You must go through another process. You cannot pump faith up from your own mind.

How do I get to believe in the explosion of the powder mills? There are certain newspapersI have confidence in those newspapers and as I read the accountI believe it. Or I meet with certain persons who either heard the explosion, or saw some of the effects produced thereby and now I believe without any effort at allI cannot help believing! Belief comes necessarily from my having confidence in those who tell me so. Now, the Spirit of God, when about to produce faith, frequently leads men to think about Christ. Christ is set forth before them crucified. They perceive that, Here is a great wonderGod clothed in human flesh to suffer for human sin!

The mind thinks, There is something here which meets my conscious needs. I can see how God can be just, for He punishes His Sonand how He can be gracious, for He forgives sin. I find it stated that if I trust myself in this Son of God, who suffered as Man and now pleads His infinite merits before the Throne of Godif I trust in Him I shall be saved. I cannot trust in Him by simply saying I will try to do it, but I look at the Bibleis that true? I look at the thing itselfdoes it look like truth? I ask friends who have tried and proved it and they tell me that they have tasted that He is gracious. Upon this evidence and specially upon perceiving the power of this Truth of God in my own soul, I believe the Word of God. The Spirit of God, working thus, leads me from the evidence given, to believe the testimony borne and I believe it.

Dear Friends, if you want to get faith, it must come through the Spirit of God! But it usually comes in this wayif the Word is not blessed to you in hearing it and meditating upon it at homethinking much of Christ and His great workwhat you have been doing is thisyou have been thinking of your sins only. What would you think of a judge who sat upon a bench and who would listen to all the complaints against a criminal, but as soon as the advocate arose to plead his cause, would say, No, I do not intend to listen to that? You have been doing that. Your poor soul stands on trial and you have been listening to the accusations of Satan and your own sins!

And the moment Christ gets up to show you His great Atonementthe moment the promise is quotedyou say, It is presumption for me to hope. My dear Friends, it is never presumption to listen to the Truth of God. If it is true that in due time Christ died for the ungodly. If it is true that he who comes to Him He will in no wise cast out. If it is true that He has said, Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If it is true that He has said, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins, why not listen to that as well as the other?

Surely you must look at the fair side as well as the foul. And while your ear is hearing of the work of Christ and the promise of God, you will be able to cry

*I do believe, I must believe,*

*That Jesus died for me.*   
I could not have thought it! Oh, it melts me! I have been trying to get a soft heart and could not get it, but I have it now all through this. Here have I been hurrying to and fro, looking after faith and assurance instead of looking to the Cross for it! But now I see it all and I am saved, for I trust in Jesus Christ alone!

I have said as much as may be needed this morning upon faith. I have tried to be brief upon each point and packed as many things as I could into the time. Now we are to have a few words about assurance.

III. The text says, You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. I cannot take the fourteenth verse, except to hint at itwe will try and preach on that this evening. Sealing, which is another name for assurance, for the witness of the Holy Spirit with our spiritthat we are born of God, is evidently distinct from faith. Please observe thatfor the text says, After that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Believing, then, is not this sealing.

And assurance, although it is akin to believing, is not believing. There is a distinction between the two things. I want you to notice the distinction. In faith the mind is active. The text uses verbs which imply action you trusted, you believed. But when it comes to sealing it uses quite another verbyou were sealed. I am active in believingI am passive when the Holy Spirit seals me. The witness of the Spirit is a something which I receive, but faith is a something which I exercise as well as receive. In faith my mind does somethingin being sealed my faith receives something. If I may say so, faith writes out the documentthere she laborsbut the Holy Spirit stamps the seal Himself and there is no hand wanted there except His own. He stamps His own impression to make the document valid. Notice the difference between the activeness and the

passiveness.

Then, again, man is commanded to believe in Scripture in many placesbut he never was commanded to be sealed. Faith is a duty as well as a privilege, but assurance a privilege only. I never find any man exhorted to get the sealing of the Spirit. I believe that every Christian should pray for it and seek it, but I know of no command. It is a gift, a priceless gift and, unlike faith, it does not constitute a subject or command. Again, we read in Scripture that men are saved by faith and live by faith, but neither salvation nor living are ever imputed to sealing or to assurance. We are not saved by assurancewe do not even live by assurance. The vital principle is couched in faith. That is the shell which holds the kernel of the inner spiritual life.

I may be saved though I never had assurance. But even if I fancied I had assurance, I could not be saved if I had not faith. To faith we say salvation is promised, but to assurance such a promise is not given. It is clear from the context that assurance follows faithafter that you believed. The Apostle does not say how soon. I believe that many souls get full assurance with faith. I have known converts who have been as certified of their interest in Christ as though they had been seventy years experimentally walking with Him. But, mark you, this is not the case alwaysperhaps not often.

Brookes gives the case of a Mr. Frogmorton who was one of the most valuable ministers of his day, but was thirty-seven years without any assurance of his interest with Christ. He trusted Christ, but his ministry was always a gloomy one, for he could not read his title clear to mansions in the skies. He went to the house of a dear friend, Mr. Dodd, to die. Just before he died, the light of Heaven streamed inhe not only expressed his full assurance of faith, but triumphed so gloriously, that he was the wonder of all round about him!

He also tells us of one Mr. Glover, who had been for years without assurance of his interest in Christ. But when he came to the fire to be burnt, just as he saw the stake, he cried, He is come! He is come! And instead of being heavy of heart as he had been in prison, he went to the stake with a light step! Three martyrs were once chained to the stake, two of them rejoicing. But one was observed to slip from under the chains for a moment and prostrate himself upon the firewood and wrestle with God and then coming back to the stake, he said, The Lord has manifested himself to me at the last and now I shall burn bravely. And so, indeed, he did, bearing his witness for his Lord and Master.

So it seems there are some of Gods saints who do not get assured till even the last moment and I will not say that there are not some of them who even, like some children, are put to bed in the dark. Christ went up to Heaven in a cloudGideon saw the angel ascending in the smoke of the incense and many a good man ascends with clouds of darkness round about himbut still he goes to Heaven! I hope these cases are very few still we bring them forward to show you that assurance is not to be looked for before faith. You might as well look for the pinnacle before the foundation, for the cream before the milk, for the apples before you plant the treefor the harvest before you sow the seed. Assurance follows faith.

Observe in the next placeand it is worthy of your noticethat assurance is to be found where faith was found. Do observe those two words, in whomin whom you also trustedin whom you were sealed. So that as I get my faith out of Christ, so I must get my assurance out of Christ. The virtual means of my faith is Christ Himself and the virtual means of my assurance must be the same. As I think of what He did for me, I believe in Him. As I continue to meditate upon that same thing, I have assurance of interest in Him. You must feed upon the flesh and blood of Christ if you would grow into strong men in Christ Jesus. A touch of Christ will heal you from all diseasebut you must hold Him fast if you would enjoy spiritual health perpetually.

To believe in Christ will save you from Hell. To be assured of your interest in Christ will give you a Heaven upon earth! Do not be content with faithbe thankful for it, rejoice in itbut ask to have more. And when you want to have more, go to Christ for itthe same fountain which first quenched your thirst must be that which shall quench it till you are taken up to drink of the River of Life which flows through the midst of Paradisewhich is no other than the Presence of Christ as a refreshment to His people.

This assurance, like faith, is the work of the Spirit of God. You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. He does this in various ways. Sometimes we get the seal of the Spirit through experience. We know that God is true because we have proved Him. Sometimes this comes through the hearing of the Wordas we listen our faith is confirmed. But there is doubtless, besides this, a special and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit whereby men are assured that they are born of God. You will observe in one place the Apostle says, The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit, that we are born of God, so that there are

two witnessesfirst, our spirit bears witness, that is, by evidences. I look at my faith and see myself depending upon Christ and then I know, because I love the Brethren and for other reasons, that I am born of God.

Then there comes over and above the witness of evidence, faith and feelingthe Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit. Have you not felt it? I cannot describe this to you, but you who have felt it know it. Did you not the other day feel a heavenly calm as you meditated upon your state and condition in Christ? You wondered where it came from. It was not the result of protracted devotion but it stole over youyou knew not how it wasyou were bathed in it as in sunlight and you rejoiced exceedingly. You rejoiced in Christthat was your basis of confidence, and that confidence came through the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit.

This has occurred sometimes in the midst of sharp conflicts just when dark despair seemed ready to overwhelm you. You may have enjoyed this comfort under peculiar trials and losses of friends and you may expect to have it when you come to die. Then, if ever in your life, you should be able to say, I will fear no evil, for You are with me (in a special sense) You are with me. The Holy Spirit, then, must give it to us, and we must wait upon Him to set His seal. And so to conclude, this is desirable to the highest degree, for it is the earnest of the inheritance. It is a part of Heaven on

earth to get an assurance worked by the Spirit!

It is not merely a pledge, for a pledge is given back when you get the thing itself, but it is an earnest. It is one cluster from the vines of Eshcol one shekel of the eternal wagemoney of the Free Grace reward. What if I say it is a stray note from the harps of angels? It is a drop of the spray from the fountains of life. It is one ingot of gold from the pavement of Heaven. It is one ray of heavenly light from the eternal Sun of Righteousness. O Christian, if you have ever known assurance, you will pant till you have it again! You can never, after seeing the sunlight, put up with the candle-light of your doubts and fears in the dungeon of despondency.

But if assurance is gone, still hang onto Jesus   
*When your eye of faith is dim,   
Still hold onto Jesus, sink or swim.   
Still at His footstool bow the knee,   
And Israels God your peace shall be.*

If you cannot feel His love in your heart, still trust Him! Oh, it was grand of JobThough He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Truly, the vitality of faith is such that if He should spurn me from His Presenceif He never gave me another look of love this side of Heavenif He gave me up to the lowest depths and bade all His waves and billows go over me, yet is He such a faithful God and so true that I dare not even, then, doubt Him. Blind unbelief would do so, but victorious faith says, Never! He cannot lie. Let God be true and every man a liar.

When faith is at her very worst, she is glorious and sparkles like a jewel in the dark mine and God will come and take her up out of all the depths and set her in His own crown as a precious jewel. Your faith has saved you, says Jesus. No, Lord, it is not faith that has done it, it is Yourself. He takes the crown royal of salvations glory, lifts it right off from His own head and puts it on the head of the poor feeble womans faith. Your faith has saved you: go in peace. And so will God do with your tempest-tossed and exercised faith! He will put the crown upon it and that faith of yours shall sing in Heaven!

Do not tell me that we shall have no faith in Heavennonsense! Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three. But the greatest of these is charity. We shall find faith to be our sweet companion there. Shall I not believe God when I get to Heaven? Shall I give up trusting my God when I get there? No, I shall trust Him for my resurrection body! I shall trust Him for the millennial splendor! I shall trust Him for the gathering of the elect! Trust Him for an eternity of bliss! Trust Him for my safe standing where He has brought me. And so, happy faith, imperishable faith, shall live and reign when sense and sight are gone past recall. The Lord give you to hear the Word, to believe in it and afterwards to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

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THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT   
NO. 1284

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 19, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the   
purchased possession, unto the   
praise of His glory.   
Ephesians 1:13, 14.

I HAVE taken the whole passage for the sake of completing the sense, but I have no intention whatever of preaching upon all of it. Practically I only need for the topic of this morning the following wordsIn whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. The sealing of the Holy Spirit will be the subject of our meditation. There are many who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ who are extremely anxious to obtain some token for good, some witness from God which shall render them quite sure that they are saved. They have not yet reached the full assurance of faith and they feel uneasy till they attain it. They feel that these matters are too important to be left at all uncertain and they, therefore, pine for some sure witness or seal.

Men will not risk their estates and no spiritually sensible man will endure to have his soul and its eternal affairs in jeopardy for an hour therefore this anxiety. It is true that by the way of faith only the fullest and best assurance may be reached, but many who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are not yet aware of this and their trembling hearts crave for a testimonial from the Infallible God to certify them that they are, indeed, saved. Yes, and I conceive that even more advanced saints, who know more fully where their standing is and confess that they can only walk by faith, yet often sing with very great emphasis of desire

*Might I but hear Your heavenly tongue   
But whisper, You are Mine,   
That cheerful word should raise my song   
To notes almost Divine.*

Though we can and do believe and can claim the privilege which belongs to those who have not seen and yet have believed, yet we would be glad to sometimes have a sight. We sometimes wish we could know by sure mark and evidence and token that our experience, after all, is a reality, and that we are, indeed, born of God

*O tell me that my worthless name   
Is engraved on Your hands!   
Show me some promise in Your Book   
Where my salvation stands!*

Now, in the best sense, this seal which we seek after is to be had! No, it is manifestly seen by many of Gods children. It does not supersede faith, but it rewards and strengthens it. There is a way by which God speaks to His own and assures them that they are His. There is a pledge and an earnestand this is freely given to the people of God. May Gods own Spirit enable me to speak aright upon this weighty subject. The text says, After that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. And, therefore, first, I shall call your attention to the position of this sealing. Secondly, to the benefits which arise out of it. And thirdly, to the sealing itself, which, indeed, I shall endeavor to explain thoroughly.

I. First, let us speak of THE POSITION OF THIS SEALING. We are desirous to get some confirming seal from God set upon our souls, some sure token that we are, indeed, His own people. That sealing we can have. God bestows it. But let us notice very carefully, lest we make a mistake, when that sealing comes. It does not come before believing. According to the text it is, after that you believed, you were sealed. Now, there are hundreds of persons who are craving for something to see or to feel before they will believe in Jesus Christ. This is wickedness and the result of an unbelief which is most offensive in the sight of God.

If you demand a token before you believe, you practically say that you cannot take Gods bare Word for your comfort, that the sure Word of Testimony recorded in the Bible is not enough for you, that the solemn declaration of God may, after all, be false. At any rate, that you find it impossible to rest your confidence upon that, alone, and must see something else. If not a miracle, perhaps you demand a dream, or a strange feeling, or a mysterious operation. At any rate, if you do not see some sign and wonder, you declare that you will not believe. You do, in fact, say to God, If You will not go out of Your way to give me what I ask, and to do for me what I demand, then I will call You a liar to Your face by refusing to believe You.

Ah, my Hearer, this will not do! This is to provoke the Lord to jealousy and he that does this shall receive no token, whatever, except it be the sign of the unbelievers of Chorazin, for whom the Day of Judgment shall be more intolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrah. Note, also, that this sealing does not necessarily come at once with faith. It grows out of faith and comes, after that you believed. We are not, in every case, sealed at the moment when we first trust in Jesus. I am persuaded that many who believe in Jesus enter into peace, directly, and perceive at once the blessed assurance which is involved in their possessing the Holy Spirit. But with many others it is not so.

I have frequently been asked this question, What is a person to do who believes in Jesus, but yet is not conscious of peace and joy, but is filled with such a conflict within that the utmost he can do is to cling to Jesus with trembling hope? I have replied, If you believe in Jesus Christ you are saved. The best evidence that you are saved lies in the assurance of the Word of God that every Believer has eternal hope. Whether you

feel that you are justified, or not, is not the point. You are to accept Gods Word which assures you that everyone that believes is justified. You are bound to believe the Testimony of God apart from the supporting evidence of inward experience. And if it were possible for you to be a Believer by the year together and yet find no peace, still you would have no right to doubt what God says because you do not feel peaceyou are bound to hold on to Gods promise whether you enjoy peace or not.

My firm belief is that where there is a real faith in the promise of God, peace and the other fruits of the Spirit come as a necessary ultimate consequence, but even then they are not grounds of faiththe Word of the Lord is the sole foundation upon which faith builds. Some people have a sort of confidence in God, but they are also looking out for confirming signs and they spoil the simplicity of their faith by having one eye on Christ and another eye on their peace of mind. Now, my Friend, this will never do. You are bound to believe in God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus unto salvation, altogether apart from peace, joy, or anything else.

The witness of the Spirit within is not the ground nor the cause of our faithfaith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. I, being a sinner, believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and I rest my soul upon Him, believing that He will save me. This is to be my standing, seal or no seal, token or no token. My dependence is not to be upon the seal of the Spirit, but upon the blood of the Son! The Spirit of God never takes the place of the Redeemer. He exercises His own peculiar office, which is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us and not to put His own things in the place of Jesus. The foundation of our hope is laid in Christ from first to last and if we rest there we are saved.

The seal does not always come with faith, but it follows after. I have said this because I am afraid lest in any way whatever you should leave the simple, plain and solid ground of confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ and in that only. Remember that a man who believes in Jesus Christ is as truly saved when he does not know it as he is when he does know ithe is as truly the Lords when he mourns in the valley of humiliation as when he sings on the mountaintop of joy and fellowship! Our ground of trust is not to be found in our experience, but in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus

*I dare not trust the sweetest frame   
But wholly lean on Jesus name.   
On Christ the solid rock I stand,   
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Note, also, as to the position of this sealing, that, while it is not the first, it is not the last thing in the Divine life. It comes after believing, but when you obtain it, there is something yet to follow. Perhaps you have had the notion that if you could once be told from the mouth of God, Himself, that you were saved, you would then lie down and cease from lifes struggle. It is clear, therefore, that such an assurance should be an evil thing for you, for a Christian is never more out of place than when he dreams that he has ceased from conflict. The natural, fit and proper position for a soldier of Jesus Christ is to be at war with sin. We are wrestlers and our

normal condition is that of striving according to His working who works in us mightily. This side of Heaven, if there is a place for nest-building and ease-taking it is not the place for youyou are a pilgrimand a pilgrims business is to be on the road, pressing forward to the home beyond.

Remember, if there are seats of ease, and no doubt there are, they are not for you since you are a runner in a great race, with Heaven and earth for witnesses. Cessation from watchfulness means ruin to your soul. The closing of conflict would show that you could never gain the victory! Perfect rest on earth would show that none remained for you in Heaven. Even if the Spirit of God seals you, what will it amount to? To the inheritance itself, so that you can say, I have attained perfection? Certainly not! To Brethren, the Scripture says, Which is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession. This side of Heaven all you can obtain is an earnest of the perfection of which Heaven is made up

*There rest shall follow toil,   
And ease succeed to care:   
The victors there divide the spoil;   
They sing and triumph there.*

Here we must labor, watch, run, fight, wrestle, agonize! All our forces, strengthened by the Eternal Spirit, must be expended in this high enterprise, striving to enter in at the strait gate. When we have obtained the sealing, our warfare is not ended, we have only, then, received a foretaste of the victory for which we must still fight on. This is the true position of the sealing. It stands between the Grace which enables us to believe and the Glory which is our promised inheritance.

II. We will notice, secondly, what are THE BENEFITS OF THIS SEALING and while we are doing so, we shall be compelled to state what we think that sealing is, though that is to be the subject of the third head. The sealing spoken of in the text does not make the promises of God to be true. Please notice that. This text has been preached upon as though it stated that the Spirit of God set His seal upon the Gospel and the promises of God. Well, dear Friends, it is true that the Spirit of God witnesses to the Truth of God and to the sureness of the promises. But that is evidently not intended here, for the text says not that the promises were sealed, but that, you were sealed.

YOU are the writing which has the stamp put upon it! YOU, yourselves, are sealed! It is not even stated that the Spirit of God seals up Covenant blessings as gold is sealed up in a bag and reserves them for the chosen Seed. The text tells us that Believers, themselves, are thus reserved and marked as the Lords peculiar treasureand it is upon Believers, themselves, that this seal of the Holy Spirit is set. No, Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit does not make the promises surethey are sure of themselves! God, who cannot lie, has uttered them, and therefore they cannot fail. Nor, my Brethren, does the Holy Spirit make sure our interest in those promisesthat interest in the promises was sure in the Divine decree, before the earth was, and is a matter of fact which cannot be changed.

The promises are already sure to all the Seed. The Holy Spirit makes us sure that the Word is true and that we are concerned in it, but the promise was sure beforehand and our interest in that promise was sure, too, from the moment in which it was bestowed upon us by the sovereign act of God. To understand our text, you must notice that it is bounded by two words, In whom, which two words are twice given in this verse. In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed. What is meant by, In whom? The words signify In Christ. It is in Christ that the people of God are sealed! We must, therefore, understand this sealing as it would relate to Christ, since so far, and so far only, can it relate to us.

Was our Lord sealed? Turn to John 6:27 and there you have this exhortationLabor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him has God the Father sealed. There is the clue to our text. Him has God the Father sealed. For since our sealing is in Him, it must be the same sealing. Notice, then, first, that the ever-blessed Son was sealed on the Fathers part by Gods giving a testimony to Him that He was, indeed, His own Son and the Sent One of the Lord. As when a king issues a proclamation, He sets His seal to it to say, This is mine, so when the Father sent His Son into the world, He gave Him this testimony, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

He said this in words, but how did He give a perpetual testimony by a seal, which should be with Him throughout life? It was by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit. The seal that Jesus was the Messiah was that the Spirit of God rested upon Him without measure. Hence we read expressions like theseHe was justified in the Spirit. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. Now, the Spirit of God, whenever it abides upon a man, is the mark that that man is accepted of God. We say not that where the Spirit merely strives at intervals, there is any seal of Divine favor, but where He abides it is assuredly so. The very fact that we possess the Spirit of God is Gods testimony and seal in us that we are His and that as He has sent His Son into the world, even so does He send us into the world.

Secondly, to our Lord Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit was a seal for His own encouragement. Our Lord condescended to restrain the power of His Godhead, and, as a Servant, He depended upon the Father for support. When He began His ministry, He encouraged Himself thusThe Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted. He found His stimulus of service, He found the authorization of His service, He found His comfort and strength for service in the fact that God had given Him the Holy Spirit. This was His joy!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we need to be encouraged for holy service by feeling quite sure that we are saved, where must we get that encouragement? Read in the First Epistle of John, the third chapter and 24th verse where the seal of God is describedHereby we know that He abides in us by the Spirit which He has given us. Read also in the fourth chapter, verse 13, Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, because He has given us of His Spirit. So that as the seal which comforted our Lord and made Him to know, in times of depression, that He was, indeed, beloved of the Father, was that He had the Spirit of God! So to you and to me, Brothers and Sisters, the possession of the Spirit of God is our continuous encouragement, for by this we may know beyond all question that we dwell in God and God dwells in us.

The seal answers a two-fold purpose. It is on Gods part, a testimony, and to us an encouragement. But the seal is meant to be an evidence to others. The Father set His seal upon His Son in order that others might discern that He was, indeed, sent of God. John says, I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God (John 1:33).

The Spirit, then, was, upon our Lord, the seal for recognition. And, Beloved, so must it be with us. We cannot be known by our fellow Christians except by the possession of the Spirit of God. Have you ever noticed how Peter claimed for the uncircumcised the rights of Church membership in the 15th of Acts in the eighth and ninth verses? He says, God, which knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. So that to Peter, the possession of the Holy Spirit was the broad seal of Heaven which the Lord never sets upon a heart wherein there is no faith. The same argument had been felt in all its power by Peter when he said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?

Paul used this as his test concerning the sons of men, for in Romans 8:9, he says, You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if, indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His, plainly indicating that the absence of the Spirit is fatal, for the Divine signature is not at the bottom of the document. But if the Spirit of God is there, then all is right, for the Lord never puts His seal to anything which is not sound and true. Rest quite sure that where the Spirit of God abides, there the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been written on the heart and the man is saved.

Further, the fourth effect of the seal upon Christ was that it was to the world a witness. The Spirit of God upon Jesus Christ was not recognized by the ungodly world to be, indeed, Divine, but they perceived and were astonished at a something about Him which they did not understand. He spoke with authority and not as the scribes and they confessed, Never man spoke like this Man. They did not know what spirit He was of, but they knew they hated it and straightway they began to oppose Him. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you have the same seal as your Lord which is described in the text as, the Spirit of promise, the same result will follow! Men will wonder at you, misunderstand you and oppose you!

And what is the reason? Never in this world did the Spirit of promise appear without opposition from the spirit of bondage. Isaac was the child of promise and did not Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, persecute him? The two seeds of the flesh and of the promise are at daggers drawn with each other! When the Lord sets His seal upon you by giving you the Spirit of promise, so that you are not under the Law but under Christ, the world will know it. They will not admire you, but they will strive against you to destroy you.

Once more, the seal upon our Lord Jesus Christ was intended for a fifth reason, namelyfor His perseverance even to the end. A seal is set upon a treasure which we mean to preserve and so was the precious Redeemer sealed. Now, you will say to me, But dare we speak of Jesus Christ as being preserved by the Spirit of God? My dear Brethren, we must never forget the wonderful self-denial of Christ in that He laid aside His own Divine power. And while He was in this world He said the Father was greater than He. And He became a Man so as to pray and to believe, and to depend upon the Father. Jesus Christ put Himself into such a condition while He was here that He relied upon the Spirit of God to uphold Him. Do you doubt it?

Turn to the 42nd Chapter of Isaiah, verse one, and there you get it in express words: Behold My Servant whom I uphold! See how He puts Himself, as a Servant, to be upheld by the Lord. My elect, in whom My Soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. There can be no doubt that this is Christ for these very words are quoted concerning Himself.

Now, what comes of the upholding of the blessed Spirit? He shall not fail nor be discouraged until He has set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His Law. So that the Spirit of God upheld Christ, sustained Him and kept Him till His lifes work was finished, without His failing or being discouraged. My Brothers and Sisters, this is how you and I must be kept! This is the seal which we need, which shall preserve us as the consecrated ones of God, so that when He comes, He shall find us under seal and not discouraged.

Let me now recapitulate. Upon our Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God acted as a seal, namely, as Gods testimony that He was His Son, as an encouragement to His own heart, as an evidence to others, as a witness to the world and as a help to perseverance, even to the end. The same benefits will the sealing of the Spirit confer upon usin Christ Jesus after that

you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

III. Thirdly, let us consider THE SEALING ITSELF. A great deal has been said on this point which has tended to foster superstition. Some have supposed that there is a separate act of the Spirit of God in which He seals Believers. It may be so, I will not raise the question. But I should be very sorry if any man here, living in sin, should, nevertheless, look back upon some time of religious excitement or enjoyment and say, I am safe, for on that occasion I was sealed. And I should be very sorry to have any Brother or Sister take as the sure reason why they are saved, some remarkable experience which they underwent on a certain day, long past.

A seal is for the present and is not a mere memory, but an object palpable now and before the eyes. I am afraid many have been deceived into carelessness by the notion of a sealing received long ago. Let us seek out the Truth of God. According to the text, as far as I can read it, here is a man who has believed in Jesus and he desires a seal that God loves him. God gives him the Spirit and that is all the seal he can wish for or expect. Nothing more is needed, nothing else would be as good. The very fact that the Spirit of God works in you to will and to do according to Gods good pleasure, is your seal! You do not require anything beyond. I do not say that any one operation of the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as the seal, but the whole of them together, as they prove His being within us, make up that seal. It is better, however, to keep to the doctrine that the Spirit of God in the Believer is, Himself, the seal

*You are the earnest of His love,   
The pledge of joys to come,   
And Your soft wings, celestial Dove,   
Will safely convey me Home.*

Now, let us look at what the context tells us about this. If you read on, the Apostle tells us that wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God are part of the seal. Kindly turn to the chapter and follow out the Apostles line of argument. He says, (verse 15), Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith, etc., cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. See, then, if you have believed in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God comes upon you and He gives you wisdom and revelation.

Doctrines in the Word which you never understood before become clear to youthe eyes of your understanding being enlightened. The blessings promised are more distinctly discerned and you see, the hope of your calling, and the riches of the glory of the Lords inheritance in the saints. The deeper Truths of God, which at first quite staggered and puzzled you, gradually open up to you and you see and appreciate them. More especially, you discover the Glory of Christ and see the exceeding greatness of the power with which the Lord works in the saints, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come. You drink deep into the blessed thought that Jesus is the Head over all things to His Church and you obtain some glimpses into the mysterious doctrine that the Church is His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we know these things aright, the Spirit has taught us, and the consequence of it is that we say to ourselves, Certainly I must be a child of God, for I never understood the things of God before. How could I have learned them if I had not been taught of God. The Master seems to stand by our side and say, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in Heaven. If you have been made to see the abounding Grace of God, the grandeur of the plan of salvation and the choice beauties of the blessed Person of Jesus Christ, you have a sure seal upon your soul, for like the blind man in the Gospels you can say, One thing I know, whereas I was blind now I see.

Following on to the next chapter you will see that the Spirit of God works in every man who possesses in him life, and that life becomes another form of the seal. You has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin. That life is of a new kind and has a renewing power so that men reject the course of this world and no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind. This new life they trace to God who is rich in mercy, who in His great love with which He loved them, even when they were dead in sins, has quickened them together with Christ. They trace this life entirely to the Grace of GodBy Grace are you savedand they see that this life produces in them good works, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

I need not explain how this life lifts us up to sit in the heavenlies with Christ, for most of you know all about it. You have received a life from above, a living and incorruptible Seed is in you. You have passed into a new world. You have feelings, desires, fears, hopes such as you never knew beforeand thus your outward life is also changedso that you follow after that which is according to the will of God. Now, Brethren, what can be a better seal to you that you are, indeed, saved, than this life which you feel within? This is the way in which the Spirit of God seals youby making you partakers of the Divine life which never has resided in the unbeliever yetand never can dwell in anyone apart from faith. To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. So that wisdom and life, which are both sure results of the indwelling of the Spirit of God, are a seal to us that we are really saved.

Go on a little further and you will notice upon the one seal a further mark, namelyfellowship. You were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,

having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Those who have believed in Jesus Christ are led by the Spirit of God to love their fellow Christians and thus, we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Once we thought the godly a dull and melancholy setat any rate we let them go their own wayand we were glad to keep aloof from them! But now we delight in their society, sympathize with their pursuits and are willing to share their persecutions.

We count the saints of God the best company in the world. We would sooner sit down and talk half an hour with a poor, bed-ridden Christian woman, than be found in the courts of princes. This brotherly love becomes a seal of Grace within our hearts, for John tells us in his First Epistle, Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:7, 12). Even more striking is that which follows, namely, that we have fellowship with God. The Apostle speaks of us as reconciled unto God by the Cross, by which the enmity is slain, and he says of our Lord, Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. I am following the course of the chapter.

When you and I feel that we commune with God, that there is no quarrel between Him and us, that He is loved of us as we are loved of Him. When we feel that we can draw near to Him in prayer and speak to Him, that He hears us and deigns to grant us gracious answers of peace, these are blessed seals of salvation. Some of us can look back on times of fellowship with God, on seasons of prevailing prayer with Him and upon countless answers to our petitions. All these become to us Infallible tokens of Divine love!

I shall not tire you if I bid you notice, for one moment, that the Apostle puts in next building upAnd are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. Are you not conscious, Believers, that you are being built up unto a divinely glorious form, after a high and noble model? It does not yet appear what we shall be, but you must be conscious that course upon course of precious stones have been built upon the foundation of your faith in Christ. Since you have known the Lord you have made a distinct advance. At times you are afraid you have only grown downwards, but you have grown! There is a something about you, now, which was not there 10 years ago.

I am distinctly conscious, somehow, that 20 years ago I was not what I now am. I sometimes feel like a bird in the eggshell! I am chipping it away bit by bit. I believe it will break, one of these days, and the bird will come out. But I often feel my wings fretted and cramped by the shell. I want the life in me to be developed and set free! Do you never feel the same? Have you not felt as if you, yourself, were big with a far more glorious nature and longed for deliverance from flesh and frailty? These groans, aspirations, hopes and desires are all seals of salvation!

You will never find the ungodly thus moved. These pangs are peculiar to life. You are not a finished structure, but a house in process of erection and you may be sure that one of these days the top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of, Grace, Grace unto it. This building up through the Spirit of God is the seal of the Spirit. It is to you the evidence that God has begun a good work in you and is carrying it on. Last of all, the second Chapter of Ephesians finishes up by saying, In whom you, also, are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And this seems to me to gather up all that I have said before. The indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in the whole of them united and in each one in particular, is a choice seal

*Do You not dwell in all the saints,*

*And seal them heirs of Heaven?*   
Yes, that is the manner of the sealing, according to the prayer of our hymn

*Jesus, my Lord, reveal   
In charms of Grace Divine,   
And be Yourself the sacred seal,   
That pearl of price is mine.*

If you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you must be the Lords! Will the Spirit of God dwell in any temple but that which God has consecrated? He may come upon men to strive with them for awhile, but He will never dwell in any heart that has not been cleansed with the blood of Jesus, nor can He possibly reside permanently in any soul which is defiled with self-righteousness and love of sin. No, Beloved, if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you need no dreams, nor angels whispers, nor noises in the air. The indwelling Spirit is the only seal you need! I put it to you, Brothers and Sisters, what more do you need? What more could God give you?

Suppose you were to meet on the road home, standing on the snow, an angel clothed in glittering white, and that he should say to you, I have a message from God to you? What if he should then mention your name and add, You are one of Gods chosen. That vision would comfort you for half-an- hour, I have no doubt, but many desponding spirits would not be comforted much longer, for Satan would say, It was snowing, right? No doubt the flakes blew into your eyes or else you simply have a fine imagination. Oh, but, you would say, I heard him speak! Ah, you had noises in your head. You are becoming a fair subject for Bedlam Asylum!

I confess if you were to tell me the story, I should not make any bones about it, but should say, You are not such a fool as to believe that, are you? And you would find many other people of the same mind. Now there can be no doubt about the seal of the text. You have been taught of God what no one but the Spirit of God could have taught you. You have a life in you which no one but the Spirit could have given youof that knowledge and that life you are perfectly consciousyou do not need to ask

anybody else about them. A man may ask me whether I know So-andSoI am the best witness whether I do or not. If I am asked, How do you know you are alive? Well, I walk about, that is all, and I am quite sure about itI do not need any further evidence.

The best seal to a mans heart must be that of which he is conscious and about which he needs not appeal to others. Give me a seal that is as sure as my own existence! I fail to see how God Himself can give me anything more sure than the gift of His Spirit working knowledge and life in me. Oh, says one, but if I could hear a voice. Suppose you did? Then the argument of fear would be that there are countless voices and one may be mistaken for another. You were in the street when you heard it. Perhaps it was a parrot or a starling in the upper window. Who knows? It is so easy for the ears to be deceived. Many a time you have said, I know I heard So-and-So, when you did not hear him, but someone like him.

I would not believe my own ears, if their evidence had to do with my soul, one half so readily as I would believe my own consciousness. Since knowledge and life and other things I have mentioned just now are all matters of consciousness, they are much better seals than anything could be which appealed like an angelic vision to the eyes, or like a mysterious voice to the ears! Here you have something sure and steadfast. If the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are His, but if He dwells not in you, you are none of His.

Take this for the closing wordGrieve not the Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemptionbut love Him, honor Him and obey Him. So will the seal always be bright before your eyes. As to you who have not believed, I conclude with thisDo not ask for seals! You have nothing to do with seals, but with Jeans. An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. Believe in Christ Jesus, and when you have trusted Him, then shall there come signs, seals, marks! God bless you, for Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 1.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK168, 458, 728.   
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THE EARNEST OF HEAVEN   
NO. 358

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 3, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

That Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. Ephesians 1:13, 14.

SO then, Heaven, with all its glories, is an inheritance! Now, an inheritance is not a thing which is bought with money, earned by labor, or won by conquest. If any man has an inheritance, in the proper sense of that term, it came to him by birth. It was not because of any special merit in him, but simply because he was his fathers son that he received the property of which he is now possessed. So is it with Heaven. The man who shall receive this glorious heritage will not obtain it by the works of the Law, nor by the efforts of the flesh.

It will be given to him as a matter of most gracious right, because he has been begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and has thus become an heir of Heaven by blood and birth. They who come unto glory are sons. Is it not written, The captain of our salvation brings many sons unto glory? They come not there as servants. No servant has any right to the inheritance of his master. Let him be ever so faithful, yet he is not his masters heir.

But because you are sonssons by Gods adoption, sons by the Spirits regenerationbecause by supernatural energy you have been born againyou become inheritors of eternal life and you enter into the many mansions of our Fathers house above. Let us always understand, then, when we think of Heaven, that it is a place which is to be ours and a state which we are to enjoy as the result of birthnot as the result of work. Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. That kingdom being an inheritance but until he has the new birth, he can have no claim to enter it.

But is it possible for us, provided that Heaven is our inheritance and we are Gods childrenis it possible for us to know anything whatever of that land beyond the flood? Is there power in human intellect to fly into the land of the hereafter and reach those islands of the happy where Gods people rest in the bosom of their God eternally? We are met at the outset with a rebuff which staggers usEye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

If we paused here we might give up all idea of beholding from our houses of clay that goodly land and Lebanon. But we do not pause, for like the Apostle we go on with the text and we add, But He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit. It is possible to look within the veil. Gods Spirit can turn it aside for a moment and bid us take a glimpsethough it be but a distant oneat that unutterable glory. There are Pisgahs even now on the surface of the earth, from the top of which the celestial Canaan can be beheld. There are hallowed hours in which the mists and clouds are

swept away and the sun shines in His strength and our eye, being freed from its natural dimness, beholds something of that land which is very far off and sees a little of the joy and blessedness which is reserved for the people of God hereafter!

Our text tells us that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance, by which I understand that He is not only the pledge, for a pledge is given for security. And when the thing pledged is given, then the pledge itself is restored. But He is an earnest, which is a pledge and something more. An earnest is a part of the thing itselfit is not only a pledge of the thing for securitybut it is a foretaste of it for present enjoyment. The word in the Greek has a stronger force than our word pledge.

Again I repeat itif I promise to pay to a man something, I may give him land or property in pledge. But if I pay him a part of the sum which I have promised, that is more than a pledgeit is an earnest because it is a part of the thing itself. So the Holy Spirit is a pledge to Gods people. Inasmuch as God has then the graces of the Spirit, He will give them the glory that results from there. But He is moreHe is a foretasteHe is a sweet ante past of Heaven so that they who possess the Spirit of God possess the first tastes of Heaven. They have reaped the first fruits of the eternal harvest. The first drops of a shower of glory have fallen upon them. They have beheld the first beams of the rising sun of eternal bliss. They have not merely a pledge for securitythey have an earnestwhich is security and foretaste combined.

Understand, then, for this is what I am about to speak of this morning. By the Holy Spirit there is given to the people of God even now experiences, joys and feelings which prove that they shall be in Heavenwhich do more, which bring Heaven down to them and make them already able to guess in some measure what Heaven must be. When I have enlarged upon that theme, I shall take the black side of the picture and remark that it is possible for men on earth to have both a pledge and an earnest of those eternal pains which are reserved for the impenitenta dark subjectbut may God grant it may be for our profit and arousing.

I. First, then, THERE ARE SOME WORKS OF THE SPIRIT WHICH ARE PECULIARLY AN EARNEST TO THE CHILD OF GOD, OF THE BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN.

1. And first, Heaven is a state of rest. It may be because I am constitutionally idle that I look upon Heaven in the aspect of rest with greater delight than under any other view of it, with but one exception. To let the head which is so continually exercised for once lie stillto have no care, no, trouble, no need to labor, to strain the intellect, or vex the limbs! I know that many of you, the sons of poverty and of toil, look forward to the Sabbath-Day, because of the enjoyments of the sanctuary and because of the rest which it affords you. You look for Heaven as Watts did in his song

*There shall I bathe my weary soul In seas of heavenly rest,   
And not a wave of trouble roll Across my peaceful breast.*

There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. Tis not a rest of sleep, but yet a rest as perfect as though they slept. It is a rest which puts from them all care, all remorse, all thoughts of tomorrow, all straining after a something which they have not as yet. They are runners no more they have reached the goal. They are warriors no morethey have achieved the victory. They are laborers no morethey have reaped the harvest. They rest, says the Spirit, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

My Beloved did you ever enjoy on certain high days of your experience a state of perfect rest? You could say you had not a wish in all the world ungratified. You knew yourself to be pardoned, you felt yourself to be an heir of Heaven, Christ was precious to you. You knew that you walked in the light of your Fathers countenance. You had cast all your worldly care on Him, for He cared for you. You felt at that hour that if death could smite away your dearest friends, or if calamity should remove the most valuable part of your possessions on earth, yet you could say, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Your spirit floated along the stream of grace without a struggle. You were not as the swimmer, who breasts the billows and tugs and toils for life. Your soul was made to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. You were passive in Gods hands. You knew no will but His. Oh, that sweet day

*That heavenly calm within the breast,   
Was the sure pledge of glorious rest,   
Which for the Church of God remains,   
The end of cares, the end of pains.*

It was more than a pledge. It was a part of the rest itself. It was a morsel taken from the loaf of delights. It was a sip out of the wine vats of immortal joy. It was silver spray from the waves of glory. So, then, whenever we are quiet and at peaceFor we which have believed do enter into rest, and have ceased from our own works, as God did from Hiswhen we can say, O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praisewhen our spirit is full of love within us and our peace is like a river and our righteousness like the wave of the seathen we already know in some degree what Heaven is. We have but to make that peace deeper and yet more profoundlasting and more continual. We have but to multiply it eternally and we have obtained a noble idea of the rest which remains for the people of God.

2. But, secondly, there is a passage in the book of Revelation which may sometimes puzzle the uninstructed reader, where it is said concerning the angels, that They rest not day and night. As we are to be as the angels of God it must undoubtedly be true in Heaven that in a certain sense, they rest not day nor night. They always rest, so far as ease and freedom from care is concerned. They never rest, in the sense of indolence or inactivity.

In Heaven, spirits are always on the wing. Their lips are always singing the eternal hallelujahs unto the great Jehovah that sits upon the Throne. Their fingers are never divorced from the strings of their golden Harps. Their feet never cease to run in obedience to the eternal willthey rest, but they rest on the wing. As the poet pictured the angel as he flewnot needing to move his wings but resting and yet darting swiftly through the

ether, as though he were a flash shot from the eye of God.

So shall it be with the people of God eternally. Ever singingnever hoarse with music. Ever servingnever wearied with their service. They rest not day and night. Have there ever been times with you, when you have had both the pledge and the earnest of this kind of Heaven? I have when I have preached once and again and again and again in one day. But some have said to me, But the constitution will be destroyed, the mind will be weakened. Such toil as this will bring the man low. But we have been able to reply, We do not feel it. For the more toil has been cast upon us, the more strength has been given.

Have you ever known what it is to have the pastors work in revival times, when he has to sit hour after hour, seeing convert after convert when the time for one meal is past and he has forgotten it? When the time for another meal has come and gone and he has forgotten thatfor he has been so busy and so happy with his feast of ingatherings, that he has been like his Master and has forgotten to eat bread and positively did not hunger and did not thirstbecause the joy of the service had taken away all fatigue?

Just at this hour, our missionaries are engaged throughout Jamaica in a sweltering sun, preaching the Word. Perhaps there has never been a more glorious revival than that which God has sent to that islandan island which has often been blessed, but which now seems to have received a sevenfold portion. One missionary in writing home says that he had not been in bed one night for a week and he had been preaching all day and all night long. And I do not doubt but his testimony to you would be, that at least, during the first part of the labor it seemed not to be labor.

He could sleep on the wing. He could rest while he worked. The joy of success took away from him the feeling of weariness. The blessed prospect of seeing so many added to the Church of God had made him forget even to eat bread. Well, then, at such a time as that he had a foretaste of the rest and the service, too, which remains for the people of God. Oh, do not doubt, if you find comfort in serving Godand such comfort that you grow not weary in His servicedo not doubt, I say, but that you shall soon join that hallowed throng, who day without night circle His Throne rejoicing. Who rest not, but serve Him day and night in His temple! These feelings are foretastes and they are pledges, too. They give some inklings of what Heaven must be and they make your title to Heaven clear.

3. But let us pass on. Heaven is a place of communion with all the people of God. I am sure that in Heaven they know each other. I could not perhaps just now prove it in so many words but I feel that a Heaven of people who did not know each other and had no fellowship could not be Heaven. God has so constituted the human heart that it loves society and especially the renewed heart is so made that it cannot help communing with all the people of God.

I always say to my Strict Baptist Brethren who think it a dreadful thing for baptized believers to commune with the unbaptized. But you cannot help it. If you are the people of God you must commune with all saints, baptized or not. You may deny them the outward and visible sign, but you cannot keep from them the inward and spiritual grace. If a man is a child of God I do not care what I may think about himif I be a child of God I do commune with him and I must. We are all parts of the same body, all knit to Christ and it is not possible that one part of Christs body should ever be in any state but that of communion with all the rest of the body.

Well, in Glory I feel I may say we know we shall converse with each other. We shall talk of our trials on the way theretalk most of all of Him who by His faithful love and His potent arm has brought us safely through. We shall not sing solos, but in chorus shall we praise our King. We shall not look upon our fellows there like men in the iron mask, whose name and character we do not knowfor there we shall know even as we are known. You shall talk with the Prophets. You shall have conversation with the martyrs. You shall sit again at the feet of the great reformers and all your brethren in faith who have fallen before you, or who have rather entered into rest before you. These shall be your companions on the other side the grave.

How sweet must that be! How blessedthat holy converse, that happy union, that general assembly and Church of the first-born whose names are written in Heaven! Have we anything on earth like this? Yes, that we have in miniature. We have the pledge of this. For if we love the people of God we may know that we shall surely be with them in Heaven. We have the earnest of it for how often has it been our privilege to hold the highest and sweetest fellowship with our fellow Christians?

Why, you and I have often said, Did not our hearts burn within us while we talked together by the way and Christ was with us both? When we have been together and the doors have been shut, has not the Master said, Peace be unto you? When love has gone from heart to heart and we have all felt knit together as one man? When party names were all forgotten? When all jealousies and bickering were driven out of doors and we felt that we were one family and all did bear the same one namehaving one Lord, one faith and one baptism? Then it was that we had the earnest, the foretaste, the first drink of that well of Bethlehem which is on the other side the pearly gate of the celestial city.

4. I have to be brief on each of these points for there are so many to mention. Part of the bliss of Heaven will consist in joy over sinners saved. The angels look down from the battlements of the city which has foundations and when they see prodigals return they sing. Jesus calls together His friends and His neighbors and He says unto then, Rejoice with Me, for I have found the sheep which was lost. The angels begin the theme. The sacred fire runs through the host and all the saints above take up the strain. Hark, how they sing before the Throne, for it has just been whispered there of some Saul, Behold, he prays.

Hark how their songs get a new inspirationhow their eternal Sabbath seems to be Sabbatized afresh and the rest becomes more joyous while they sing of new-born sons added to the family and new names written in the register of the Church below! Part of the joy of Heaven and no mean part of it, will be to watch the fight on earth, to see the Conqueror as He marches on and to behold the trophies of His grace and the spoils which

His hands shall win. Is there anything like this on earth? Yes, there is when the Spirit of God gives to us joy over sinners saved!

The other evening, when some of us sat in our Church meeting what joy was there, when one after another, those who had been plucked from the deepest Hell of sin made avowal of their faith in Christ! Some of us look back upon those Church meetings as the best nights we ever spent. When first one and then another has said, I have been plucked as a brand from the burning, and the tale of grace has been told. And a third has stood up and said, And I, too, was once a stranger wandering far from God and Jesus sought me. Why, we have some of us gone home and felt that it was Heaven below to have been there! We have felt more joy over the conversion of others, we have sometimes thought, than even over our own!

It has been such bliss while we have taken the hand of the convert and the tear has been in both eyeswhen the word of gratitude has been spoken and Jesus Christ has been magnified by lips that once blasphemed Him. My Brothers and Sisters, though the whole world should censure me, I cannot help it. I must tell it to the praise of Gods free grace and boundless love. There are hundreds here that are the most wonderful trophies of grace that ever lived on earth. My heart has been gladdened and your hearts have been gladdened, too. I must not keep it back. I will not. It was my Masters work, it is to His honor, it is to His praise. We will tell that on earth which we will sing in Heaven. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And I do believe that the joy we felt when sinners have been converted, has been an earnest and a pledge that we shall be partakers of the like joy in Heaven!

5. But to proceed. Here is another earnest of Heaven, which is rather a personal matter than one which is drawn from others. Did you ever get a knotty passage in Scripture which repeated itself in your mind so many times that you could not get rid of it? You borrowed some commentaries you opened them and you found that you might enquire within, but get no information whatever upon the particular subject you wished most to be informed about. Commentaries generally are books which are written to explain those parts of Scripture which everybody understands and to make those that are dark more mysterious than they were before.

At any rate, if that was the aim of the different authors they have most of them admirably succeeded. I do not believe in great commentaries upon the whole Bibleno one man can write such a book so that all of it shall be valuable. When a man gives his whole life to some one book, that one is worth reading. When a man has taken up, as some have done, the Epistle to the Romans, or the Book of Genesis and gone on year after year toiling through it, then such a book has been a monument of labor and has been valuable to the Christian student. But generally large commentaries give little information where most it is needed.

Well, disappointed, you have gone back to your Bible and have said, I must not meddle with this text, it is above me. But it has repeated itself in your ears. You could not make it out. It has followed youdogged your stepsit would not go away from you. At last you thought, There was a message from God in that text. You prayed over it. While you were praying, some one word in the text seemed to lift itself right out of the connection and shone upon you like a star. And in the light of that one word you could see the meaning of all the words that preceded and followed and you rose up from your knees feeling that you knew the mind of the Spirit there and had got a step forward in Scriptural knowledge.

You remember the day, some of you, when you first learned the doctrines of grace. When we were first converted we did not know much about them. We did not know whether God had converted us, or we had converted ourselves. But we heard a discourse one day in which some sentences were used, which gave us the clue to the whole system and we began at once to see how God the Father planned and God the Son carried out and God the Holy Spirit applied. And we found ourselves on a sudden brought into the midst of a system of Truths which we might perhaps have believed beforebut which we could not have clearly stated and did not understand. The joy of that advance in knowledge, by Gods grace, was exceeding great.

I know it was to me. I can remember well the day and hour when first I received those Truths in my own soulwhen they were burnt into me, as John Bunyan saysburnt as with a hot iron into my soul. And I can recollect how I felt I had grown on a sudden from a babe into a manthat I had made progress in Scriptural knowledge, from having got a hold once and for all of the clue to the Truth of God. Well, now, in that moment when God the Holy Spirit increased your knowledge and opened the eyes of your understanding, you had the earnest that you shall one day see not through a glass darklybut face to face and by-and-by you shall know the whole Truth, even as you are known.

6. But further than thisto put two or three thoughts into one, for brevitys sakewhenever, Christian, you have achieved a victory over your lustswhenever after hard struggling you have had a temptation dead at your feetyou have had in that day and hour a foretaste of the joy that awaits you, when the Lord shall shortly tread Satan under your feet. That victory in the first skirmish is the pledge and the earnest of the triumph in the last decisive battle. If you have overcome

one foe, you shall overthrew them all. If the walls of Jericho have been dismantled, so shall every fort be carried and you shall go up a conqueror over the ruins thereof.

And when, Believer, you have known your security in Christwhen you have been able to say, I know that my Redeemer lives and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him when you have felt sure that earth and Heaven might die, but His love could never pass awaywhen you have sung out the strong lines of Toplady

*My name from the Palms of His hands   
Eternity will not erase;   
Impressed on His heart it remains   
In marks of indelible Grace*

when you could put your foot upon a rock and feel that you stood securely, knowing that you were safe in Him and because He lived, you must live alsoin that hour you had the pledge and the foretaste of that glorious security which should be yours, when you are beyond gunshot of the infernal fiendbeyond even the howling of the infernal dog.

O Christian, there are many windows to Heaven through which God looks down on you. And there are some windows through which you may look up to Him. Let these past enjoyments be guarantees of your future bliss. Let them be to you as the grapes of Eshcol were to the Jews in the wildernessthey were the fruit of the landand when they tasted them, they said, It is a land that flows with milk and honey. These enjoyments are the products of Canaan, they are handfuls of heavenly flowers thrown over the wall. They are bunches of Heavens spices brought to times by angel hands across the stream.

Heaven is full of joys like these. You have but a few of them. Heaven is full with them. There your golden joys are but as stones and your most precious jewels are as common as the pebbles of the brook. Now you drink drops and they are so sweet that your palate does not soon forget then. But there you shall put your lips to the cup and drink and never drain it dry. There you shall sit at the well head and drink as much as you can draw and draw as much as you can desire. Now you see the glimmerings of Heaven as a star twinkling from leagues of distance. Follow that glimmering and you shall see Heaven no more as a star, but as the sun which shines in its strength.

7. Permit me to remark yet once more. There is one foretaste of Heaven which the Spirit gives which it were very wrong for us to omit. And now, I shall seem I dare say, to those who understand not spiritual mysteries, to be as one that dreams. There are moments when the child of God has real fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what fellowship between man and man means. There is as real a fellowship between the Christian and Christ. Our eyes can look on Him.

I say not that these human optics can behold the very flesh of Christ, but I say that the eyes of the soul can here on earth more truly see Christ, after a spiritual sort, than ever eyes of man saw Him when He was in the flesh on earth. Today your head may lean upon the Saviors bosom. Today He may be your sweet companion and with the spouse you may say, Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine. I pray you, think not that I rave! I speak what I do know and testify what I have seen and what many of you have seen and known, too.

There are moments with the believer, when, whether in the body or out of the body, he cannot tellGod knowsbut this he knowsthat Christs left hand is under his head and His right hand does embrace him. Christ has shown to him His hands and His side. He could say, with Thomas, My Lord and My God, but he could not say much more. The world recedes, it disappears. The things of time are covered with a pall of darkness. Christ only stands out before the Believers view. I have known that some Believers have been in this state, could say with the spouse, Stay me with apples, comfort me with flagons, for I am sick of love.

Their love of Christ and Christs love to them, had overcome them. Their soul was something in the state of John, whom we described last Lords-Day morning: When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. A sacred faintness overcomes my soul, I dieI die to prove the fullness of redeeming love, the love of Christ to me. Oh, these seasons! Talk not of feasts you son of mirth! Tell us not of music, you who delight in melodious sound. Tell us not of wealth and rank and honor and the joys of victory. One hour with Christ is worth an eternity of all earths joys. May I but see Him, may I but see His face, but behold His beautiescome winds, blow away all earthly joys I havethis joy shall well content my soul.

Let the hot sun of tribulation dry up all the brooks. This fresh spring shall fill my cup full to the brimyes, it shall make a river of delight, wherein my soul shall bathe. To be with Christ on earth is the best, the surest, the most ecstatic foretaste and earnest of the joys of Heaven. Do not forget this, Christian! If you have ever known Christ, Heaven is yours. And when you have enjoyed Christ, you have learned a little of what the bliss of futurity shall be.

8. I do not doubt, also, that on dying beds men get foretastes of Heaven which they never had in health. When Death begins to pull down the old clay house, he knocks away much of the plaster and then the light shines through the chinks. When he comes to deal with our rough garment of clay he pulls it to rags first. And then it is we begin to get a better view of the robes of righteousness, the fair white linen of the saints with which we are always covered though we know it not. The nearer to death, the nearer to Heaven, says the Believer. The more sick, the nearer he is to health. The darkest part of his night is indeed the dawning of the day. Just when he shall think he dies he shall begin to live.

And when his flesh drops from him, then is he prepared to be clothed upon with his house which is from Heaven. Children of God in dying have said wonderful things which it were scarcely lawful for us to utter here. It needs the stillness of the robinthe solemn silence of the last hourthe failing eye, the chinked utterance, the pale thin hand to put a soul into their utterances. I remember when a Christian Brother, who had often preached with me the Gospel, was sore sick and dying. He was suddenly smitten with blindness, which was a first monition of the approach of death and he said to me

*And when you see my eye strings break,   
How sweet my moments roll;   
A mortal paleness on my cheek,   
But glory in my soul.*

He said it with such emphasis, as a man who, but two or three minutes after, stood before his God, that I can never read those lines without feeling how well the poet must have foreseen a death like his. Yes, there are mystic syllables that have dropped from the lips of dying men that have been priceless pearls. There have been sights of Heaven seen in the midst of Jordan which these eyes cannot see, until this breast shall be chilled in the dread and cold stream. All these things that we have mentioned are the fruits of that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

II. A few minutes onlyand, O God! Help us!with all solemnity, I utter a few sentences upon THE BLACK REVERSE OF THE JOYOUS PICTURE I HAVE PRESENTED TO YOU.

There is another world for the wicked, as well as for the righteous. They who believe not in Christ are no more annihilated than those who do believe in Him. Immortality awaits us all. We die, but we die not. We live forever. And if we fear not God, that immortality is the most frightful curse

that ever fell on creature   
*To linger in eternal death,   
Yet death forever fly.*

Can we tell what that world of woe is? In vain do we talk to you about the pit that is bottomless and the fire that never can be quenched and the worm that dies not. These are but images and images which are used so often that we fear they are almost threadbare in your estimation and you will scarcely give an ear to them. Listen, then, if you are this day without God and without Christ in the world. You have in yourself a few sparks of that eternal fire. You have already been singed by the vehement heat of that furnace which to some men has been so hot that even when they have passed it on earth, like Nebuchadnezzars mighty men, they have fallen down, smitten by the heat thereof before they came within its flames.

Ungodly, unconverted men have an uneasiness of spirit. They are never contented. They want something. If they have that, they will want something more. They do not feel happy. They see through the amusements which the world presents to them. They are wise enough to see that they are hollow. They understand that the fair cheek is painted. They know that its beauty is but mere pretense. They are not befouledGod has awakened them. They are sensible enough to know that this world cannot fill a mans heart. They know that an immortal spirit is never to be satisfied with mortal joys. They are uneasy. They wish to kill timeit hangs heavy on their hands.

They wish they could sleep three and twenty hours out of the four and twenty, or drink half the day. They try if they cannot find some pleasure that may wake up their energiessome new device, some novelty, even though it were novelty of sinwhich might give a little excitement to a palate that has lost all power to be pleased.

Now when a man gets into that uneasy state, he may make a guess of what Hell will be. It will be that uneasiness intensified, magnified to the extremeto wander through dry places, seeking rest and finding none, always thirsting, but never having a drop of water to cool that thirst. Hungering, but feeding upon wind and hungering still. Longing, yearning, groaning sighing, conscious of misery, sensible of emptiness, feeling poverty but never getting anything whereby that poverty may be made rich, or that hunger may be stayed. Ah, you uneasy ones, may your uneasiness bring you to Christ!

But unconverted men without Christ have another curse which is a sure foretaste to them of Hell. They are uneasy about death. I have my mind now upon a person who trembles like an aspen leaf during a thunderstorm. And I know another man who could bear a storm very well, but if there is the slightest thing the matter with him, if he has a cough, he fears his lungs are affectedif he feels a little hoarse, he is sure he will have bronchitis and die. And that thought of dying he cannot bear. He will hear you talk about it and crack a joke over it merely for the sake of covering up his own dismay.

He fancies you cannot see through him. But you can plainly discover that he is as afraid of dying as ever he can be. I know at this moment a family where the governess was instructed, when she took the situation, never to mention the subject of death to the children or else she would be instantly discharged. Oh, that fear of dying which haunts some men! Not when their blood boils and they are excitedthen they could rush to the cannons mouth, but when they are cool and steady and look at it. When it is not the swords point and glory, but dying, mere dyingthen they shiver.

Oh, how these strong men start and how they quail! Full many an infidel has recanted his infidelity thengiven it all up when he has come to deal with the awful mysteries of death. But those already of death are but the foreshadows of that darker gloom which must gather round your spirit, except you believe in Christ. With some men it has even gone further than this. When a man has long resisted the invitations of the Gospel, long gone from bad to worse, from sin to sina horror, an unspeakable horrorwill seize hold upon him at times, especially if he is a man who is given to intoxication. Then a delirium will come upon him, mingled with a remorse, which will make his life intolerable.

It has been my unhappy lot to see one or two such cases of persons who have been ill and have been vexed with fearsfears of a most hideous cast which I could not remove. You speak to them about Christ, they say, What have I to do with Him? I have cursed Him hundreds of times. You speak to them about faith in Christ. Faith in Christ, they say, what is the use of that to me? I am past hope, I am given up and I do not care about it either. And then they collapsego back again into that dull despair which is the sure advance guard of damnation itself.

With these men one may pray. They bid you pray for them and then they say. Get up, Sir, it is of no use.; God will never hear you for me. They will ask you to go home and pray. But assure you that it will be useless to do so. You read the Bible to them. Dont read the Scriptures, they say, every text cuts me to the quick, for I have neglected the Word of God and all my time now is past. You tell them that

*While the lamp holds out to burn,*

*The vilest sinner may return.*   
No, no, they cannot. You may tell them that there is hopethat Jesus Christ calls many at the eleventh hour. You picture to them the thief on the cross.

No, nothey put far from them all hope and choose their own delusionsand perish. Now such men give the gravest picture of what Hell must be in these forebodings of the wrath to come. I saw one man, now in eternity and where he is, God knows. I could not describe to you what I saw that day of him. He said he would not die and walked up and down as long as there was life in him, under the notion, as he said, that if he could walk about he knew he should not die. He would not die, he said. He would live, he must live. I cannot die, he said, for I must be damned if I die. I feel I must. And that poor wretch, sometimes giving ear to your admonitions, then cursing you to your face, bidding you pray and then blasphemingdying with Hell commenced, with all the horrors of perdition just beginninga sort of infant perdition strangling to be born within him!

Oh, may God deliver you from ever knowing this vilest premonition of destruction! And how shall you be delivered, but by this? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. For he that believes and is baptized shall be savedso says the ScriptureHe that believes not shall

be damned. Trust Christ and you are saved, be you whom you may. Come to the foot of the Cross and cast yourself where His blood is dropping and you are saved. Give your heart to Him, believe in Him, repose your confidence in Him.

May the Spirit of God enable you to do this! May He help you to repent of sin and having repented, may He bring you to Christ, as the sin Propitiator! And may you go away this day, saying, I do believe in Christ. My soul rests in Him! And if you can say that, the joy and peace in believing, which must follow a simple faith in Christ, shall be to you the work of the Holy Spirit of promise and the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON [On a night when the Tabernacle was thrown open to all comers, the ordinary hearers vacating their seats for the occasion.] The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us

**who believe, according to the working of   
His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own**

**right hand in the heavenly places.   
Ephesians 1:18-20.**

You see the text begins with a personal experience within the mind and judgmentthe eyes of your understanding being enlightened. Everything depends upon the opened eyes! The scene may be fair and the light may be bright, but if the sight is gone, all is in vain. Zedekiah had his eyes put out by the king of Babylon and then he was taken down to the imperial city, but as for being able to enjoy anything, he might as well have been in a desert. There were vast halls, palaces, hanging gardens and a city wall which was the wonder of the world, so that Babylon is called, by the Prophet, the glory of kingdoms and the beauty of the Chaldees excellencybut the blinded monarch beheld nothing of all the grandeur of the golden city and to him her wealth was as though it had not been.

Thus is it with us by naturewe have no apprehension of spiritual things, no power to discern eternal goodour foolish heart is darkened. Therefore the Lord must first enlighten the eyes of our understanding, or else, however precious the Truth of God and however clearly it may be stated, we shall never be able to apprehend it. I find there is a rendering of the text which runs thus, The eyes of your heart being enlightened, and it strikes me that this version has about it the appearance of being the correct one, because Divine things are usually better seen by the heart than by the understanding.

There are a thousand things which God has revealed which we shall never understand and yet we can know them by a loving, trusting experience. Our Savior says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The purifying of the heart is the enlightening of the spiritual eyes. Strange as it may seem, the true eyes of the renewed man is seated rather in the heart than in the headholy affections enable us to see and, as far as possible, to understand Divine things. I pray that in each one of us the eyes of our heart may be enlightened so that we may know spiritual things as they are best known.

Now, the prayer of our text was offered for Christiansfor converted persons, for those who had faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saintsyet Paul says that he never ceased to pray that their eyes might be enlightened. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, he who sees most needs to have

his eyes enlightened to see more, for how little as yet of the Glory of God have any of us beheld? Even that favored pilgrim who has been led by the shepherds to the top of Mount Clear, to stand there with telescopic glass and gaze into the glories of Immanuels land has yet only begun to perceive the things which God has prepared for them that love Him!

I pray God that if we already see, we may see more, until our eyes shall be so strengthened that the light of the New Jerusalem shall not be too strong for us, but amid the splendor of God which outshines the sun, we shall find ourselves at home. But if Believers need to have their eyes enlightened, how much more must those who are unconverted? They are altogether blind and, consequently, their need of enlightenment is far greater. They were born blind and the god of this world takes care to further darken their minds. Around them there broods a sevenfold midnight, the gloom of spiritual death. They meet with darkness in the daytime and grope in the noonday as in the night.

O blind eyes, may Jesus touch you! May the Spirit bring His sacred eye salve to make you see and, tonight, though it is not ours to give you eyes, we will tell you what is to be seen, hoping that, perhaps, while we give the description, God may give you eyes with which to verify our report. Perhaps even the reporting of these things may set you longing for them and, when you have but a longing, God will hear you! If that longing is turned into a prayer and that prayer is kindled by a spark of faith, that longing shall be the beginning of light to your soul and you shall see the salvation of God!

Tonight, then, there are two things we shall ask about what things are to be seen and known according to the text? And, secondly, why it is our anxious desire that every person here should see and know these things?

I. First, then, WHAT IS TO BE SEEN AND KNOWN ACCORDING TO THE TEXT? When you heard me read it, you must have noticed that it contains three whats. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Upon these three whats I shall try to speak tonightmay the Holy Spirit speak through me to all your souls.

Our first point is, What is the hope of His calling? A great many persons never think about religion because they cannot believe that there is much in it. If they had half an idea of what is to be gained by it, even now, and of the unspeakable blessedness which will come of it throughout eternity, surely their own desire to benefit themselves would incline them diligently to

consider it even if they went no further. So promising a matter is at least worth looking into, for it would be a great pity to miss present and eternal happiness if it can be had. But no, they suppose it to be a very small and trifling thing, fit only for the thoughts of priests and women and such weak folkand so they neglect it, despise it and look after other business.

Tonight, while I try to tell what is the hope of the Christian mans calling, I boldly claim your best consideration! If the preacher may not request it on his own account, he may assuredly ask it on the ground that his theme deserves it. Perhaps while we are speaking of the worth of this hope and you are lending an attentive ear, the Lord may lead you to seek His face. Is it not written, Incline your ear and come unto Me, hear and your soul shall live? Many a man has been tempted to start upon a voyage by hearing much of the land to which he sails. Praise his goods and you will find buyers for the merchant. Such is our desire at this timewe would so speak of the hope of our calling as to allure those who are eager after sweets to taste and see that the Lord is good!

The idea of the text seems to me to be illustrated well by the patriarch Abraham. Abraham was living in his fathers house in Ur of the Chaldees when a call came to him. That call came from God. He was to separate himself entirely and to get away to a land which he had never seen. What was the hope of that calling? It was the hope that God would give him a seed and give to that seed a land to dwell in. Thus spoke the Lord unto himI will make of you a great nation and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The great nation which should spring from him would possess the land in which he was to wander as a pilgrim and a stranger, according to the Word of the LordFor all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever. For the sake of that hope Abraham forsook everything and dwelt in tents, a pilgrim and a sojourner with God, living entirely by faith, but living grandly and sublimelyand thus becoming the father of all Believers throughout all ages, greater than a prince among the sons of men.

Now, there comes to every man who is a true Christian, a call from God. We speak of it by the name of, effectual calling. The Spirit of God personally applies the Truth of Scripture to the heart and makes the chosen man to feel that it belongs to him. The Believer perceives that he is separated from others by the Sovereign Grace of God and that, therefore, he must come out from the world and no longer live according to the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears, but by faith upon God as seeing Him who is invisible.

This makes the Believer very different from the rest of mankind. Those who walk by sight do not understand him. They generally misrepresent him and frequently they hate himbut he is content to be unknown, for he remembers it is written, You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Therefore the world knows us not because it knew Him not. But what is the prospect which leads the Believer to this life? What is the hope of his calling? Brothers and Sisters, let me describe the hope of those of us who have come out to walk by faith in Christ Jesus!

We have already obtained abundantly enough to reward us for obedience to the call and, even if nothing were shut up in the closed hand of Hope, her open hand has greatly enriched us! Christian, you already have in possession the forgiveness of your sins, acceptance in Christ, adoption into the Divine family and the nature, rank and rights of a child of God! You already possess that which makes you among the happiest of mankind and you often feel that if it should turn out that there is no hereafterand if you should die like a dogyet still your faith in God has given you such consolation and such strength, such peace and such joy that

you would bless God that ever you had it! Our hope has not injured us either as to character or to happiness and even if it turned out to be false, we are at least as well off as the unbeliever!

Still, our main possession lies in hope. We carry a bag of spending money in our hands, but the bulk of our wealth is deposited in the Bank of Hope. What, then, is the Christians hope? Well, first, he hopes and believes that he shall be under Divine protection forever and ever; that he shall be the object of Divine Love time out of mind and when time shall be no more. He hopes that all things shall work together for his good in the future as he perceives they have done in the past and as he is persuaded they are doing now. He expects a stormy voyage, but because Christ is at the helm, he hopes to come to the fair haven at last.

He expects to be tempted, but he hopes to be upheld. He expects to be slandered, but he hopes to be cleared. He expects to be tried, but he hopes to triumph. Sustained by this hope he dreads no labors and fears no difficulties

*He holds no parley with unmanly fears,   
Where duty bids he confidently steers.   
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,   
And, hoping in his God, surmounts them all.*

His hope is that all through life, whether that is long or short, (and he has not much care about the number of his years), underneath him will be the everlasting arms! He hopes that the Lord will be his shepherd and he shall not want. He hopes that goodness and mercy will follow him all the days of his life. Therefore he is not afraid to die, for then he expects to come into actual possession of his best possessions!

He looks for his best things last. He believes that when it is time for him to depart, Jesus will come and meet himand the thought of that meeting puts aside all idea of the grim terrors of the grave! His hope leaps over the grave and lands him in a glorious resurrection! Does not the hope of our calling open grandly? We hope, also, and have good ground for it, that after death at the Day of Judgment we shall have, as we believe we have now, a perfect justification! A dread assize will be held. Upon a great White Throne reflecting all things and brilliant with its purity, Jesus the Judge of all will sit and He shall separate the mass of mankind into two portions as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

We know that in that day He will discern those who believed in Him and trusted Him and obeyed Him and sought to be like He and we hope that we shall be of that blessed number! For us there shall be no sentence of condemnation, for it is written, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. We hope for a sentence of acquittal and we, therefore, challenge the judgment which others dread. Clothed with a Divine Righteousness, we await, with expectation, the day which shall make the impenitent wish that they had never been born! Hope takes into her consideration the most dreaded of all events and weaves it into her song. The end of all things is not the end of hope! Is not this brave hoping?

The hope of a man who sings on foreverliving in the circle of Divine Love, dying beneath the protection of Divine Power and abiding in the judgment justified by Divine Justiceaccepted in the Beloved and beloved of the Father! What else can we hope for? We hope for absolute perfection! The God who has changed our hearts will continue the good work of sanctification till He has taken every sin out of us, every desire for sin, every possibility of sin! We expect Him to renew our minds and prevent our making so many mistakes in judgment. We expect Him to renew our hearts that they may be wholly set on Divine and heavenly things! We expect Him to renew our entire spirit till, when the prince of this world comes, he shall find nothing in usno tinder for his sparks, no corruption in which to sow his evil seed. We hope to be perfect, even as God is perfect. As Adam, when he came from his Makers hand, so shall we be and something more, for we shall possess a life in Christ which our unfallen progenitor knew not in Paradise.

We hope, also, that this body of ours will be perfected. It will lie in the grave and disintegrate into dust unless our Lord Jesus should come before our deathof this we make small accounthaving no very intense desire to avoid the grave wherein our glorious Redeemer lay! We have nothing to lose, but much to gain by dying, for therein we put off our mortality that at the Resurrection we may put on immortality

*Corruption, earth, and worms   
Shall but refine this flesh,   
Till when the Lord, our Savior, comes   
We put it on afresh.*

We expect that then our body shall be raisedchanged, but still the same as to identity. For us is the promise of the ScriptureI will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. When our body awakes, though sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption! Though sown in weakness it shall be raised in power! Though sown a body only fit for the soul, it shall be raised a body meet for our highest nature, even for our spirit!

As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Our body shall be fashioned like unto the body of Jesus Christ Himself! We are looking forward to a time when we shall have done with aches and pains, with weariness and decay, with old age and its infirmities and with all liability to death. We expect perpetual youth to be our portion and that joy shall thrill through every nerve and sinew of our frame, which now, alas, so often becomes the theater of agony! Yes, this is our hopeperfection of spirit, soul and bodyfor Christ has redeemed the whole and He will have the whole to be His inheritance! And in the whole of our manhood His glorious image shall be reflected forever!

What else is the hope of our calling? Why, that being thus cleared in judgment and made absolutely perfect, we shall foreverfor eternal duration is the glory of our heritagewe shall

forever enjoy infinite happiness! We do not know what form, the joys of eternity will take, but they will take such form as shall make us the most happy. We shall have Heavens best, yes Gods best, and what that is, who among us can guess, though he uses all his knowledge and gives the reins to his expectancy? Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; but He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.

And, as far as we understand that Revelation, we are taught by it that we shall enter into a state of complete rest and perfect peace; a state of holy delight and of serene and blissful activity; a state of perfect praise; a state of satisfaction; a state, probably, of progress, but still of completeness at every inch of the road; a state in which we shall be as happy as we are capable of being, every vessel, little or great, being filled to the brim! We shall be supremely blessed, for at the right hand of God there are pleasures forevermore. This is the hope of our calling!

Nor even now have we come to an end, for something more yet remains. You say, Can there be more? Yes, we expect to be forever in a condition of power, honor and in relationship to God. We hope to be brought so near to God that all the universe shall distinctly see that we are courtiers of the palace of the great King, yes, princes of the blood royal of the skies! We shall be very near to God, for we shall be with Jesus where He is and sit upon His throne. We shall serve our God and see His face while we serve Himand His Glory will be reflected upon us and from usand we shall be His dear sons and daughters in Christ Jesus forever and ever!

There is not an angel in Heaven with whom the meanest saint might wish to change estates, for though the angels excel us, now, we shall certainly excel them in the world to comewe shall be nearer the Eternal Throne than any one of them, inasmuch as Christ Jesus is our brother and not the brother of angels. He is God-and-Man in one Person and there was never God and angel in the same union. We shall be next to the Creatorlet us speak it with bated breath but leaping heartwe shall be next to the eternal God, one with His only-begotten Son, who is one with Himself! This is the hope of our calling!

Oh Sirs, is not this worth having? Is not this worth striving for? When you count the cost, what cost is worth the counting? Might not a man, for this, lay down all that he has, yes, and his life, also, to keep this pearl of great price? And what if you should miss it? What if you should miss it? What if it could be proven, as it never will be, that there are no pains of Hell and no eternal wrathyet is this not enoughto have lost this immortality of glory, this immortality of honor and of likeness to God? This pain of lossmay none of us ever incur itfor it is Hell to lose Heaven! It is infinite misery to miss infinite happiness! To be within an inch of an immortality of bliss and honor and to let it slip bywill not this be an endless torment to the soul?

To clutch the pleasures of an hour, all earth-stained as they are, shall we renounce the ecstasies of eternity? To snatch at bubbles which break before we can grasp them, shall we let unfading glories go? For the mere sake of dwelling at ease by escaping thought shall we let boundless blessings run by us, counting ourselves unworthy of them and so losing them? I pray that you may know what is the hope of His calling and that when you know it, you may cry, I will have it! If it is to be had, by Gods Grace, I will have it now! So may it be, for Christs sake.

And now I turn to the second, what, of the text and that is more marvelous, still! I am sure I cannot preach the text outit is too great for me, but here it isThat you may know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Mark well that Gods people are, by Grace, made to be His saints, His select, His holy onesand then they are viewed as His inheritance! The whole world is Gods. The cattle on a thousand hills and all lands and seas are His and yonder starry worlds which in profusion are sown in space are all His! But He deigns to call sanctified men and women His inheritance in a special sense! They are His peculiar treasure, His crown jewels, dear and precious to Him. The Lords portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.

I want you to think of this grand Truth of God, because practical results flow from it. If you and I are believers in Jesus, we are Gods inheritanceand the Lord has what the Apostle calls, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. But how can God make riches out of poor men and women? They are believers in Jesus, but what is there in them that He counts to be richesriches of glory, too? We answer, first, He has spent riches of love upon them, for He loves them, poor as they are and sick and sorry as they often are! He loved them from before the foundation of the worldand you know how precious a thing becomes when you love it. It is a beloved keepsake and you would not part with it for a mint of gold. It may have little intrinsic value, but if you have long set your heart upon it, how dear it becomes to you.

God has loved His people so long and so intensely with such an unbounded love that there is a wealth in them to His heart! Oh, that we knew something of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints as measured by the gauge of love! Moreover, the Lord has spent a wealth of wisdom on His saints. A material may be almost valueless at first, but when a wise man has exercised his thought and skill upon it, the value may be enhanced a thousand-fold. But God has thought of His saints forever! Eternal Wisdom found her delights with the sons of men and occupied herself on their behalf before the foundation of the world! How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them!

Gods wisdom has exhibited itself at its full in the plan of redemption. I scarcely hear of His deliberating for any purpose except for the salvation of His people, but in that matter we continually read of, the counsel of His will, to show us that, speaking after the manner of man, the Lord has reasoned within Himself how best to save His own people. His thoughts of wisdom and prudence have been exercised upon His saints and, therefore, it is that there is a riches of glory about them. What is more, when the riches of His love and of His wisdom had been expended, it came to pass that it was necessary that He should spend a life of suffering upon them.

Look to the glorious landscapes of rock and hill and dale and mountainturn your eyes from grassy slope to snowy summit sparkling in the sunand while you admire all things, remember that God has costlier works than these! None of these cost the Lord an Incarnation and a death! Look, if you will, to all the majestic halls of Heaven where the lamps of Glory are lit with supernal splendor, but neither angel, nor cherubim, nor seraphim cost their Lord bloody sweat! Then look at His peopleview His inheritance in the saintsfor it is there that the Son of God, taking upon Himself human nature, sighed and groaned and sweat great drops of blood and felt the agonies of death!

As the Lord looks over all that He has made, He sees nothing that has cost Him suffering and death till He comes to His people! Jesus knows what the saints cost Him. He estimates them at a rate usual among men,

for men say, The price is what it will fetch, and Jesus knows what His people fetched when He redeemed them by giving Himself for them! Measured by that standard, God has, indeed, riches of glory in His inheritance in the saints! And then there comes great glory to God from the workmanship which He puts into His people.

When He made the world it was with a voice. He spoke, and it was done. When He made the things that are, He had but to will and they stood forthbut in the making of a Christian it needs the labor of the GodheadFather, Son and Holy Spirit must all work to create a new creature in Christ Jesus! The Father must beget, the Son must redeem, the Spirit must regenerateand when this is done, the Godheads Omnipotence must be put forth to keep a Christian alive and to perfect him and present him faultless before the Presence of God with exceeding joy. An artisan can put into a small piece of iron of no worth at all so much labor that it shall be valued at scores of poundsand the Triune God can expend so much workmanship upon our poor nature that a man shall be more precious than the gold of Ophir! Valued thus, the Lord may well speak of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Now, as I desire, if I can, to lead you into a sense of this glory for a minute, I should like you to accompany me while I speak somewhat carefully but yet enthusiastically about what the Christian becomes when God has perfected His work upon him. Notice, then, that when, at the last, the Believer shall have been perfected by the work of the Spirit, as he will be, man will be an extraordinary creature! Listen! God has made matter and upon matter has impressed His will and from the tiniest drop to the mightiest orb matter never disobeys the Law which God imposes upon it. This is a great triumph. Call it, the law of gravitation, or whatever you will, it is quite certain that all inanimate nature is put under law by the Most High and that it never rebels!

Huge as this great universe is, God has as complete power over it as you have over the ball which you toss in your hand. This is glorious, but still it is small glory compared with that which God obtains from His people when they arrive at Heaven, for they will not be merely dead, inert matter governed by laws, but they will be full of life and moral freedom and yet they will be as completely subject to the Divine mind as are the atoms of matter. This will be an achievement, indeedto have produced free agents which will be under no control of force, but perfectly at liberty and yet will be forever absolutely obedient to the Divine will!

Listen again. The perfected saints will be creatures of a very peculiar form, for they will not be pure spirit, dissociated from matter. I understand yonder spirits before the Throne standing in their obedience because they have no materialism to hamper them and drag them down. Angels are spirits without material bodies and they obey God, listening to His commands, but a perfected saint is a creature in which the material is linked with the spiritual! Such are we now and I suppose, in a measure, such shall we abideand yet there will be no sin in us, no violation of the Divine command! Man is a strange mixture. He is next akin to Deity and yet he is brother to the worm!

We are partakers of the Divine Nature and the children of Godand yet as to our bodies we are linked to rocks and stones and grosser things. Man renewed by Grace touches the center in Christ Jesus, but being man he sweeps the circumference of creatureship and includes within himself a summary of the whole creation. He has been called a microcosm, or a little world and so, indeed, he is. Such a creature God is now perfecting. A being in whom dust and Deity each own a kindred. Such a being, purified from taint of evil, shall greatly glorify God!

Think, again, dear Friends. There once stood a bright spirit in Heaven, leader of the angels, but the place was too high for him and the Son of the Morning fell from Heaven and dragged others with him. God is making, by His Grace, beings who will stand next to His Throne, but will remain forever reverently loyal. They will be peers in His kingdom, but they will never be proud or ambitious. We, my Brethren, though in full possession of our free agency, shall never fall from our eternal glory, but shall be forever faithful! We shall have passed through such an experience of sin; we shall so intensely feel our indebtedness to Grace; we shall so fervently love the dear Redeemer that we shall cast our crowns at His feet and we shall ascribe our joy to Him, alone, and so shall never dream of revolting from Him.

God is thus making beings whom it will be safe to exalt to honors so near His ownwill not this be a triumph of power and goodness? Can you think of it, that you will be one of such favored creatures, if indeed you are a Believer? These beings will have known evil. Think of that! The unfallen angels have never actually known evil, but in restored man shall be fulfilled the devils lie made into Gods truthYou shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. They shall hate evil as the burnt child dreads fire and they shall love righteousness because by righteousness they have been savedand in righteousness they have been created anew! How wonderful will that creature be which has known sin and remains a free agentand yet will never yield to folly but abide forever in holiness held by bonds of love!

Oh, when I think of the destiny of a child of God, my eyes sparkle, but my tongue refuses to utter what I think! What a being are you, O man! What are you that God should visit you? He has made you a little lower than the angels, but in Christ Jesus He has crowned you with glory and honor and given you dominion over all the works of His hands, yes, in Christ He has raised you up and made you to sit with Him in the heavenly places, far above principalities and powers and your time to reign and triumph forever is hard at hand! How glorious is God in His people! God in Christ Jesus, seen in the Church, who is like unto you?

Now, the point is that if this is the riches of Gods Glory in His inheritance in the saints, you may read it in another way and say, This is the riches of our inheritance, too, for what shall we be if God is to have us for an inheritance? Will you miss it? Will you miss it? Will you miss it? If this is a dream, I could wish to die rather than have the illusion dispelled! But it is fact, as Gods Word is true! Will you miss it, then? Oh, if there were crowns to be scrambled for, most men are ambitious enough to seek for one, though it might be a curse to them! If there is gold, or if there is fame, men have but to hear the chink of the metal or the blast of the trumpet and many stir themselves to win! But here is honor, glory and

immortality in Christand it is to be had for the asking, it is to be had by simply believing and trusting in Jesus Christwill you have it? Oh, foolish hand that is not stretched out to receive it! Oh, foolish heart that does not pray for it! God grant you to know what is the riches of His inheritance in the saints, that you may seek to be a part in that inheritance and seek it now!

Now, the third what What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. I thought I heard somebody saying, Woe is me! Woe is me! I hear of what man may be. I hear of what God may make of him, but, woe is meit will never come to my lot! I am so weak, so fickle, so irresolute, so frail! Woe is me! I am undone. I have no strength!

Now, the third what is thisthat you may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, who believe. Now, learn this and know it, that in the conversion, preservation and salvation of any one person, God exhibits as great a power as He manifested when He raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places! The salvation of no man in the world is by his own strength. It is by the power of God, for we are His workmanship. This fact should greatly relieve you who are discouragedthe thing is impossible with youbut it is not impossible, or even difficult with God! He that has worked us to the same thing is God and He is quite as able to work it in you, my dear Hearer, as to work it in the Apostle Paul himself. God can do all things!

Now, when our Lord Jesus lay in the tomb, He was dead, but God quickened Him. Jesus was imprisoned in the sepulcher and the stone at the graves mouth was sealed and guardedbut the stone was rolled away, the guards were frightened and the Lord of Life rose from among the dead! Every sinner is shut up in the tomb of sin by evil habits, but Christ can roll away the stone and the sinner can come forth a living man! Our Lord continued on earth among men for several days and, despite human enmity, no man hurt Him, for He had received a Life and a Glory which they could not approach. The saints also abide here among men and many seek to destroy them, but God has given them a new life which can never be destroyed, for He has hedged it about from all its adversaries.

All the powers of darkness fought against the Lord Jesus Christ, but, through the power of God, He conquered them all. I think I see Him, now, ascending up on high leading captivity captive in the power of God. So, my Brothers and Sisters, you will be opposed by the powers of darkness and by your own evil heart, but you shall conquer, for God will put forth the same power in you which He manifested in His dear Son and you, too, shall lead captivity captive! I see the Lord Jesus entering the pearly gates and climbing to His Throne. There He sits and none can bring Him down! And you, too, believing in Jesus, shall have the same power to tread down all your foes, your sins, your temptations, till you shall rise and sit where Jesus sits at the right hand of God!

The very same power which raised Christ is waiting to raise the drunk from his drunkenness; to raise the thief from his dishonesty; to raise the Pharisee from his self-righteousness and to raise the Sadducee from his unbelief. God has power among the sons of men and this power He puts forth in making them to be a people that shall show forth His praise. Oh, that you knew what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, because then you would fling away despair. There remains nothing for you in this case but to submit to the Divine power! God will work in yoube willing to be worked upon!

O Spirit of the Lord, work in our hearers this good will! Drop yourselves like plastic clay at the Potters feet and He will put you on the wheel and mold you at His pleasure. Be willing, it is all He asks yoube trustful, it is all His Gospel requires of you and, indeed, both will and trust He gives you! If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. Be willing to let go of the sin which ruins you! Be willing to learn the Truth of God which will renew you! Be willing to sit at Jesus feet; be willing to accept a finished salvation at His hands and all the power that is needed to lift you from this place to the starry gates of Heaven is waiting to be shed upon you! God give you to know this and so to rest in Jesus and be saved!

II. The last word is to be upon the second headWHY WE WISH YOU TO SEE AND KNOW ALL THIS. I have, in effect, been all along enforcing this second head as the sermon has progressed and so I shall not need to detain you many minutes, except with a practical recapitulation. We want you to know the hope of His calling that you may not neglect it, nor set anything in competition with it. I tried, as my poor words enabled me to tell you, what a hope the calling of God gives the Christian. I charge you, do not let it go! I shall probably never meet the most of you again and if any shall say to you afterwards, Well, what did the man say? I would like you to be compelled to say, He said thisthat there is a future before us of such Glory that he charged us not to lose it. There are the possibilities of such an intense delight forever and ever that he besought us to ensure that delight by accepting Christ and His way of salvation.

Next we want you to believe the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, that you may see where your hope lies. Your hope lies in not being your own any more, but in being the Lords and so realizing the riches of the glory of Gods inheritance in the saints. The saints belong to their Lordyour salvation will be found in experimentally knowing that you are not your own because you are bought with a priceyes, in admitting at this moment that your honor and happiness are found in being the Lords! If you are your own, you will spend yourself and be ruinedbut if you are ChristsHe will take care of you. Oh, if I thought that I had a hair of this head that belonged to only myself, I would tear it out! But to be owned by Jesus altogetherspirit, soul and bodyto be Christs man in the entireness of my being, this, I say, is glory, immortality and eternal life! Be your own, and you will be lost! Be Christs and you are saved!

The closing thought is this. We want you to know the exceeding greatness of Gods power that you may not doubt, or despond, or despair, but come now and cast yourselves upon the Incarnate God and let Him save you! Yield yourselves unto Him that the great Glory of His power may be manifest in you as in the rest of His people. I dont want you to go until

you have really hidden these things in your hearts to ponder them in the days to come. I set bread before youdo not merely look at it, but eat a portion now and carry the rest home to eat in secret! Our preaching is often too much like a fiddlers playing. People come to see how it is done and then they pass round the question, What did you think of him?

Now, I do not care two straws what you think of me, but I do care a whole world what you think of Christ and of yourselves and of your future state! I pray you forget the way in which I put things, for that may be very blundering and faulty! But if there is anything in the things, themselves, consider them with care. If you judge the Bible to be a fraud and that there is no Heaven to be had, then gosport and laugh as you pleasefor you will only act consistently with your erroneous imagination! But if you believe Gods Word to be true and that there is a glorious hope connected with the Christians high calling, then in the name of prudence and common sense why do you not seek it? Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you find it!

I ask the Lords people here present and I know that there are many such in the audience tonight, to pray that this appeal may have an effect upon many in this great crowdthat they may seek the Lord at once with full purpose of heart. O Spirit of God, work it, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 1; 2:1** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK176, 757, 728. LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDSAccept my most loving salutations. May all Grace abound towards each one of you and may your joy and peace be multiplied thereby. I feel daily improving in health and strength; only my knees remain feeble. I still adhere to my determination, if the Lord wills, to preach on Lords-Day, April 13. May His Presence, then, be with us. I earnestly entreat the prayers of all who know how to plead with God that when I return among you it may be in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit and that my usefulness may be increased a hundredfold. Surely all the suffering I have endured and all the rest I have enjoyed should bring forth some fruit unto God! Yet so feeble are we that we profit nothing unless the Spirit of the Lord quickens us. By all the affectionate interest which you have up to now shown in my ministry, intercede for me, I beseech you, that I may yet be made a blessing to myriads,

Yours in heartiest love,   
*C.H. SPURGEON*  
Mentone, March 27, 1879

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #534 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MIGHTY POWER WHICH CREATES AND SUSTAINS FAITH   
NO. 534

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 11, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is   
His body, the fullness of Him   
that fills all in all.   
Ephesians 1:19-23.

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart is one of the simplest things imaginable. To trust Christ, to depend upon His power and faithfulness is such a childlike act that one sees no extraordinary difficulty in it. Yet, to bring the human mind to exercise simple faith in Jesus is a work of the most astounding power. To bring down the pride of man, to subjugate his will and to captivate his passions so that he shall cheerfully accept that which God presents to him in the Person of Christ Jesus, is a labor worthy of God.

How strangely vile are they who cannot be brought to know their own mercies, except by an Omnipotent power! The blessed Spirit of God is always the secret Author of faith. It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Our text twice over uses the strongest words which could be employed to set forth the Almighty power exhibited in bringing a soul to believe in Jesus and in bringing that believing soul onward till it ascends to Heaven. You will carefully notice we have first of all this expression, The exceeding greatness of His power. And then we have on the other side of the word Believe, lest it should escape from the sacred barrier, these words, According to the working of His mighty power.

Now, the first expression is a very amazing one. It might be read thus The superexcellent, sublime, overcoming, or triumphing greatness of His power. And the other is even more singularit is a Hebrew mode of speech forced to do duty in the Greek tongueThe effectual working of the might of His strength. Or, The energy of the force of His power, or some such strong expression as that. As if the Apostle was not content to say, You believe through the power of God, nor through the greatness of that power, but through the exceeding greatness of His power. And not satisfied with declaring that the salvation of man is the fruit of

Gods might, he must needs put it, His mighty powerno, as if that were not enough, he writes the energy, the efficacious activity of the power of that might. No amount of straining at the passage can ever get rid of the grand doctrine which it contains, namely, that the bringing of a soul to simple faith in Jesus and the maintenance of that soul in the life of faith displays an exercise of Omnipotence such as God alone could put forth.

Nor need we, dear Friends, be at all surprised at this, when we recollect what the work of salvation really is. Be it never forgotten by us that the salvation of a soul is a creation. Now, no man has ever been able to create a fly, nor even a single molecule of matter. Man knows how to fashion created substance into many forms. But to create the minutest atom is utterly beyond his might. Jehovah alone creates. All things were created by Him and for Him. No human or angelic power can intrude upon this glorious province of Divine powercreation is Gods own domain.

Now, in every Christian there is an absolute creationCreated anew in Christ Jesus. The new man, after God, is created in righteousness. Regeneration is not the reforming of principles which were there before, but the implantation of a something which had no existence. It is the putting into a man a new thing called the spirit, the new manthe creation not of a soul, but of a principle higher stillas much higher than the soul as the soul is higher than the body. Since the life and principle created are the most glorious of all Gods works, being in fact a part of the Divine nature itself, I may say most boldly that in the bringing of any man to believe in Christ, there is as true and proper a manifestation of creating power, as when God made the heavens and the earth.

Further than this, there is more than creationthere is destruction. No man can destroy anything. Since the world began, not a single particle of matter has ever been annihilated. You may cast matter into the depths of the sea, but there it is. It still exists. Cast it into the fire and the fire consumes itbut either in the ash or in the smoke, every atom survives. Fire does not destroy a single particle. There is as much matter in the world now as when God first spoke it out of nothing. It is as great an exercise of divinity to destroy as it is to create

*Know that the Lord is God alone   
He can create and He destroy.*

In the regeneration of every soul there is a destruction as well as a creation. The old man has to be destroyedthe stony heart has to be taken away out of our flesh. And though this is not done in all of usno, nor in any of us completelyyet the day shall come when sin shall be utterly destroyedboth root and branch and all evil principles shall be torn up by the roots and, like our sins, they shall cease to beso that if they were searched for they could not be found. When the morning stars sang together because a world was made, creation was their one theme.

God made the world out of nothing. That was an easy task compared with making a new heart and a right spirit, for nothing at least could not oppose Godnothing could not stand out against Him. But here, in salvation, God had to deal with an opposing something which He has to fight with and to destroy. And when that has been reduced and overcome, then comes in the creating power by which we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. So that it is a double miracle, something more than creationit is creation and destruction combined.

The work of salvation is most truly a transformation. Be you transformed by the renewing of your mind. You who have been made anew in Christ Jesus know in your own hearts how great that transformation is. The wolf, with all its bloodthirsty tendencies, feeds quietly with all the amiable gentleness of the lamb. The lion eats straw like the ox. The desert becomes a garden, and the dry land springs water. What is more wonderful still, stones of the brook become children unto Abraham. The Lord takes the man who is like the leopardcovered with spotsand cleanses him till he is whiter than snow.

He takes the Ethiopian, black as night, and does but touch him with the matchless blood of Jesus and he becomes all together fair and lovely. None of the fanciful transformations of which Ovid sang of old could ever rival the matchless work of God when He displays His power upon the human mind. Oh, what a difference between a sinner and a saint, between dead in trespasses and sins, and quickened by Divine Grace! If God should speak to Niagara and bid its floods in their tremendous leap suddenly stand stillthat were a trifling demonstration of power compared with the staying of a desperate human will. If He should suddenly speak to the broad Atlantic and bid it be wrapped in flames, we should not even, then, see such a manifestation of His greatness as when He commands the human heart and makes it submissive to His love.

Remember, too, as if this were not enough, that the conversion of a soul is constantly compared to quickeningthe quickening of the dead. How great the miracle when the dry bones in Ezekiels vision suddenly became a great army! Greater still is the transcendent work of night when dead souls are quickened and made to serve the living God! Indeed it is not only the first act of conversion which displays Divine powerbut the whole of the Christians career, until he comes to perfectionis a clear display of the same. The spiritual life may be likened unto the burning bush which Moses saw in Horeb. It burnt, but it was not consumed. Such is the Christianlike a bush, he is most fitting fuel for the flame. Yet the flame does not hurt him. It kindles about him, but he is not destroyed.

Or the Christian life may be likened to walking upon water. As Peter trod the waves and did not sink so long as his faith looked to Jesus, so the Believer, every day, in every footstep that he takes is a living miracle. Faith, too, in its life may be compared to flyingThey shall mount up on wings as eagles. I bear you as upon eagles wings. The Believer every day takes venturesome flights into the atmosphere of Heaven, rises above the world, leaves its cares and its wants beneath his feet and that, too, with no other wings but those of faith and love. Herein is a continued and splendid miracle of the Divine power.

But to come to our textlaying it down, then, as being most certain that the work of the conversion and sanctification of a Believer is an amazing display of Divine mightwe have in the text given to us a most singular analogy. The Apostle declares to us by the Holy Spirit that the

very same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead and exalted Him to the highest Heaven is seen in the conversion and preservation of every individual Believer. Now, we shall first notice the analogy. Secondly, we shall consider the reason of it. And thirdly, we shall observe the inferences which come from it.

I. First of all, we shall consider THE ANALOGY WHICH THE APOSTLE HERE POINTS OUT. Conceive that you hold a great pair of golden compasses. You are to put one foot of the compass here upon the grave of Christ. You are to open those compasses till you reach Christ ascending up into Heaven. Widen them again and again and again, till you put down the other foot of the compass where Christ is Head over all things to the Church, which is His fullness. Now, can you imagine such a stretch as that? You have to conceive of the power by which the dead body of Christ is brought to all that pre-eminence of honorand then to remember that just such power is seen in you if you are a Believer.

In examining the wonderful picture before us, we begin with Christ in the grave, by noticing that it was in Christs case a real death. Those loving hands have taken Him down from the Cross. Those weeping eyes have let fall hallowed drops upon His face. Tenderly have the women wrapped Him about with spices and fine linen, and now He is about to be put into the tomb. He is assuredly dead. The pericardium of the heart has been piercedblood and water have both freely flowed. Lift up the pierced hand and it falls at once to His side. The lids of yonder eyes, so red with weeping, do but cover eyes glazed with death. The foot has no power of motion.

Take up the Corpse, you loving bearers, carry it and put it into the tombthis is no trance, but a most certain death. So is it with usby nature we are really dead. We were dead in trespasses and sins. Try to stir the natural man to spiritual action and you cannot do it. Lift up his hand to good works, he has no power to perform them. Try to make the feet run in the ways of righteousness. They will not move an inch. The fact is that the heart is dead. The living pulse of spiritual life which was in our parent Adam has long ago ceased. Neither can the eyes perceive any beauty in Immanuel, nor can the nostril discover the fragrance of the Lords sweet spices, nor can the ear hear the voice of the Beloved. The man is absolutely and entirely dead as to anything like spiritual life. There he lays in the grave of his corruption and must lay there, and rot, too, unless Divine Grace shall interpose.

In Christs case, He was not only dead, but as the text tells us, He was among the dead. He has raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. Do notice that. He lay for some time sleeping among those who dwelt in the tomb among the dead. Three days and nights He is a denizen of the lonely shades. He was numbered among the victims of deaths dart. He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death. Such were some of uswe were among the deadand were by nature the children of wrath, even as others in the case of some of us, our outward life was just that of other ungodly men. Were they drunkards? So were we. Were they immoral? So were we. Did they take delight in the flesh? So did we. Did they follow the desires of the mind? So did we.

Were they hard-hearted and impenitent and unbelieving? So were we. Whatever may be said of any ungodly man, may be said of at least some of those whom God has quickened by His Divine power. We, like Jesus, were reckoned among the dead. If you had seen His Corpse, you would have discovered no difference between it and the body of another, save only that He saw no corruption. Dear Brothers and Sisters, in this our case is lower than that of our Lord, for we did see corruption. The old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Yes, more, we were children that are corrupters, and in nothing did we differ from others, save that the Lord had predestinated that no bands of death should hold us forever, for He was determined to save and to bring us to His right hand.

Come with me again to the new tomb in the garden. Will that sleeper ever rise? Will that hallowed tomb ever be burst? No, never while time and eternity shall last, unless God shall interfere. Here comes a heavenly messenger. His face is like lightning and his raiment white as snowand for fear of him the keepers do quake and become as dead men. So, when the time comes, in Gods great power, He sends His messengerit is no angelic spirit whose face is like lightning but it is some humble minister of Christ, who, nevertheless, is clothed with power.

He has in his mouth a sharp two-edged sword and when he speaks of Christ, for fear of Him sins tremble and the prejudices and enmities of mens hearts become as dead men. The Divine power is seen all the more in the fact that the messenger in the second case is an earthen vessel, a poor creature of flesh and blood. There is a Divine mandate for our resurrection, as much as for that of Jesus Christ.

There came with that messenger a mysterious life. You cannot see it, but inside that tomb a Spirit has fallen upon those once bleeding limbs and entered that lifeless Corpse. The eyes shall soon see the light, for the hands are already unwinding the napkin from the brow. The cerements are unbound, one by one. The feet are free and the whole frame is clear of every encumbrance. No one saw the life come back. If anyone had watched that Corpse, they could not have seen the vital spark of heavenly flame return to its proper altar. No, it was a mysterious thing.

Ah, there was a time with us when the messenger of God came, but he could not quicken us. He could only make the keepers shake and tremble. But a mysterious life from God the Holy Spirit fell into our souls and we were as we never were before. We trembled with a new fear, rejoiced with a new joy, believed with a fresh confidence and hoped with a Divine hope. We lived! And oh, can we ever forget the moment when first we began to live unto God? Divine Spirit, You did it. Let all the glory be unto Your name.

Then came an earthquake, by which the stone was rolled away, showing that the power put forth was enough to shake the earth and to make all the elements obedient. Surely when God shakes but common dust and clay, and rock and stone, we wonder and men stand in awe. But when he rends the harder marble of our hearts and moves the grosser cast and heavier earth of our spirits, there is reason to praise and bless His name!

The stone being removed, forth came the Savior. He was freeraised up no more to die. He stood erect, beheld by His followers, who, alas, did not know Him. And even so we, when the Divine life has come and the Divine energy has burst our tomb, come forth to a new lifeno more to die.

Then men of the world know us not, because they knew Him not. They misunderstand our motives, they misrepresent our actions, they contort our wordsbecause now we have a life of which they are not the subjects and have come into a resurrection-state to which they are utter strangers. You see the parallel holds. We, too, in the same manner as Christ was raised from the dead, have been made to live in newness of life, even as the Master Himself said, As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them. Even so the Son quickens whom He wills.

Please to note here, dearly beloved Friends, that in the resurrection of Christ, as in our salvation, there was put forth nothing short of a Divine power. It was not angelic or arch-angelic, much less was it human. What shall we say of those who think that conversion is worked by the free will of man? Who ascribe mans salvation to his own goodness of disposition, or to his willingness to accept that which God presents to him? Beloved, when we shall see the dead in the graves rise by their own power, then expect to see ungodly sinners turn to Christ. It is not the ministry, it is not the Word preached, nor the Word heard in itself. All the power proceeds from the Holy Spirit.

Observe again, that this power was irresistible. All the soldiers and the high priests could not keep the body of Christ in the tomb. Death himself could not hold Christ in his bonds. When the life-pangs first began to move in Jesus, he could no longer be held by death. Then was death swallowed up in victory. The Father brought forth His begotten Son and said, Let all the angels of God worship Him. He was the first begotten from the dead. Irresistible is the power put forth, too, in the Christian. No sin, no corruption, no temptation, no devils in Hell, nor sinners upon earth can ever stop the hand of Gods Grace when it intends to convert a man. If God says, You shall, man shall not say, I will not, or, if he does, as the trees of the woods before the hurricane are torn up by the roots, so shall the human will give place to the irresistible power of Divine Grace.

Observe, too, that the power which raised Christ from the dead was glorious. It reflected great honor upon God and brought great dismay upon the hosts of evil. So there is great glory to God in the conversion of every sinner.

Lastly, it was everlasting power. Christ being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. So we, being raised from the dead, go not back to our dead works nor to our old corruptions, but we live unto God. Because He lives, we live also, for we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God. The parallel will hold in every point, however minute. Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

You see I have not stretched the compasses half-way yet. We have only proceeded so far as to see Christ raised from the dead. But the power exhibited in the Christian goes farther than thisit goes onward to the ASCENSION. If you will carefully read the story of the ascension, you will notice first that Christs ascension was contrary to nature. How should the body of a man without any means be borne upward into the air? While He blessed them He was taken out of their sight. So the Christians rising above the world, his breathing another atmosphere, is contrary to nature. How would you marvel if you saw a man suddenly rise up into the sky? Wonder more when you see a Christian rise above temptation, worldliness, and sin. When you discover him forsaking those things which once were his delight and mounting towards Heaven!

You will observe again, that the disciples could not long see the rising Savior. A cloud received Him out of their sight. So in our case, too, if we rise as we should rise, if the Spirit of God works in us all the good pleasure of His will, men will soon lose sight of us. They will not understand us. They will be certain to run here and there, wondering at this and marveling at that. They will call us mad, fanatical, wild, enthusiastic, and I know not what else. And we, on our part, must not wonder at it, for now we look down and wonder at them as much as they wonder at us. They think it strange that we should be looking for unseen things, and hoping for that which we see not. We, on the other hand, look down upon them and wonder how it is that they can heap together things of clay, and find a living joy in dying things and fix eternal hopes on shadows that are soonso soonto melt away forever.

Jesus Christ continued to ascend by that same Divine power until He had reached the seat of Heaven above. He was gone, really gone from earth altogether. Such is the Christians life. He continues to ascendthe Lord makes him dead to the world and the carnal multitude know him no more. Where his treasure is, his heart is also. He is risen with Christ and his affection is set on things above, not on things on the earth. See, Beloved, we have stretched our compass somewhat wide now, when we say that there is as much Divine power seen in raising the Christian above the world, as in raising Christ from the grave into Heaven.

But that is not all. When the Master had come to Heaven, we are told in the text, that He was made to sit down at the right hand of God. Sitting at the right hand implies honor, pleasure and power. Conceive the change! He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. They spat in His face and bowed the knee, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He was full of miseryMy soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, said He. The plowers made deep furrows upon His back and His visage was more marred than that of any man. But now His joy is full. He is at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures forevermore.

He was a worm and no manthe despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn. They shake the head. They thrust out the lip, saying, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. Let Him deliver Him, seeing He delights in Him. But see Him now! He has sat down forever at the right hand of God, even the Father. Note the change from depths of reproach to heights of Glory! From fearful deeps of sorrow to glorious summits of bliss! From weakness, shame and suffering, to

strength and majesty and dominion, and glory! Such is the change in the Christianjust such a change.

You, too, what were you? Were you worthy to have been cast upon a dunghill? No, scarcely fit for that. You were like salt which had lost its savor, neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill. God and man might have cast you out. You were utterly worthless and fit for nothing. As for suffering, ah, how were your bones broken by convictions of sin! The sorrows of death compassed you and the pains of Hell get hold upon you, for the arrows of God stuck fast in your loins, and the sword of God pierced to the dividing asunder of your soul and spirit.

As for power, what power had you? You could not lift a finger. You could not pray. You could not believe. And yet, where are you now? Why, if you know where you are, you are this day as a Believer sitting down at the right hand of GodGods Beloved One, ministered unto of angels Gods Son, endowed with power and made to sit and reign together with the Lord Jesus Christ! All that sitting at the right hand of God can mean in respect to the Man Christ Jesus, it means in respect to every Believer.

The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews, writes concerning man in Christ Jesus, What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of Your handsYou have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor. At the right hand of God is the Believers place at this very day. May an act of faith give you a sweet enjoyment of it.

But note next, that Christ was not only put at Gods right hand, but He had a complete triumph givenfar above all principalities and powers, that neither good angels have eminence compared with Him, nor evil angels any power in contrast with Him. It is not only said that He was above them, but far above them. And so is the Believer. As for evil angels, the Lord shall tread Satan under your feet shortly. As for holy angels, Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation? So that we, in the Person of our Lord, are far above all principalities and powers.

You will not fail to observe that man has also universal dominion, Follow the passageAnd has put all things under his feet. And so has the Lord put all things under His peoples feet. Their sins and corruptions, their sorrows and afflictions, this world and the world to come, are all made subject unto us, when He makes us kings and priests, that we may reign forever. No, as if this were not enough, Christ is then honored with a gracious Headship. He is made to be Head over all things to His Church and He is made the fullness of that Church for, He fills all in all.

But, as if the Believer must be made like his Lord even here, observe that if Christ fills all in all, the Church is His fullness in Christ, the Church is the head of the universe under God. For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field. The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea and whatever passes through the paths of the sea.

I do not know whether I have brought forth the parallel completely. If you view our Lord as descending in His agony ever so deep and then behold Him in His glory ever so high. If by combining judgment and imagination, hope and fear, you can get some glimmering of a thought of how low the Savior went and how loftily He climbed, then you may transfer that to your own statethe same power is at work today, has been at work and will be at work in youto lift you up from equal depths to equal heights, that in all things you may be like unto Christ. And having been like He is, numbered with the transgressors, you may like He obtain the lot and the heritage to reign forever and ever at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

I cannot speak on such a topic as thisit overpowers meit is by far too grand for my limited gifts of utterance, but I trust not too great for human delectation. We can delight in it and suck honey, marrow and fatness from it.

II. Now we must note, in the second place, THE REASON OF THIS. Why does God put forth as much power towards every Christian as He did in His beloved Son? Well, my Brothers and Sisters, I believe the reason is not only that the same power was required, and that by this means He gets great glory, but the reason is thisunion. It lays in the wordunion. There must be the same Divine power in the member that there is in the Head, or else where is the union? If we are one with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, there must be a likeness.

Note, first, that there cannot be a body at allI mean not a true living bodyunless the members are of the same nature as the Head. If you could conceive a human head joined to bestial limbs, you would at once understand that you were not looking upon a natural body. If here were a dogs foot, and there a lions mane, and yet a mans eyes, and a human brow, you could never conceive of it as a body of Gods creation. You would look upon it as a strange monstrosity, a thing to be put out of sight, or to be shown for fools to gaze at as a nine-day wonder. But certainly not as a thing to display Divine wisdom and power.

Nebuchadnezzars dream, you remember, had an image of which the head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Do you think that the person of Christ is to be so odd a medley? Our Head, we know, is like much fine gold. Thanks be unto God, we are well persuaded that a body of Gods making will be of the same material all the way through. He will not have, I say, a perfectly glorious Head allied to members in which the Divine energy has never been seen. The same power which sparkles about the Head must shine in the members, or else it cannot be a body constituted according to the analogy of nature, or according to the usual methods of the Divine Worker.

This is not the most forcible mode of putting it. Let us notice that if all the members were not like the Head and did not display the same power it would not be glorious to God. Some of the old tapestries were made at different times and in different pieces and occasionally the remark is heard, That part of the battle-scene must have been worked by a different needle from the other. You can see here an abundance and there a deficiency of skill. That corner of the picture has been executed by a far inferior hand.

Now, suppose in this great tapestry which God is workingthe great needlework of His love and powerthe mystical Person of Christthat we should say, The Head has been worked, we can see, by a Divine hand that glorious brow, those fire-darting eyes, those honey-dropping lips are of God, but that hand is by another and an inferior artist and that foot is far from perfect in workmanship. Why, it would not be glorious to our Great Artist. But when the whole picture is by Himself we see that He did not begin what He could not finish and that He had not inserted a single thread of inferior value.

Note again, that it would not be glorious to our Head. I saw the other day a cathedral window in the process of being filled with the richest stained glass. Methinks the great person of Christ may be compared to that great cathedral window. The artists had put in the head of the chief figure in the most beautiful glass that ever human skill could make, or human gold could purchase. I have not seen it since, but imagine for an instant that the workers afterward found that their money failed them and they were obliged to fill in the panes with common glass.

There is the window, there is nothing but a head in noble colors and the rest is, perhaps, white glass, or some poor ordinary blue and yellow. It is never finished. What an unhappy thing, for who will care to see the head? It has lost its fullness. There is the head, but it is strangely circumstanced. If you complete it with anything inferior, you mar and spoil it. It is the head of an imperfect piece of workmanship. But, dear Friends, when all the rest of the picture shall have been worked out with just the same costly material as the first part, then the head itself shall be placed in a worthy position and shall derive glory as well as confer glory upon the body. You can read this parable without an interpreter.

I must add that if anything, the power manifested in the member should be greater than that manifested in the Headif anything, it should be greater. A marble palace is to be built. Well, now, if they build (and oh, how many people do this kind of thing in their houses) the front with costly stone and then erect the back with common stock bricks. If the pinnacles are made to soar with rich Carrara to the skies, and then down in the walls common stone is seen, everybody says, This was done to save money. But if the whole structure throughout, from top to bottom, is of the same kind, then it reflects much honor upon the great builder and declares the wealth which he was able to expend upon the structure.

But suppose that some of the blocks of marble used in the foundation have lain in a very dark quarry and have been subject to damaging influences, so that they have lost their gloss and polishthen surely they will want more polishingmore workmanship to make them look like that bright cornerstone, that noble pinnacle which is brought out with shouts. Christ Jesus was in His nature fit, without any preparing, to be a part of the great temple of God. We in our nature were unfit. And so, if anything, the power should be greater. But we are constrained to rejoice that we find in Scripture that it is just the same power which lifted the man Christ Jesus to the throne of God, which now shall lift each one of us to live and reign with Him.

Moreover, to conclude this point, the loving promise of our Lord will never be fulfilled (and He will never be contented unless it is), unless His people do have the same power spent upon them as He has. What is His prayer? I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am. That they may behold My glory. And then He adds, The glory which You gave Me I have given them. You know how the union stands I in them and You in Me. We must be like our Head. Is He crownedwe must be crowned, too.

He is a good Husband. He will enjoy nothing without His spouse. When she was poor, He became poor for her sake. When she was despised, He was spit upon, too. And now that He is in Heaven, He must have her there. If He sits on a throne, she must have a throne, too. If He has fullness of joy and honor and glory foreverthen so must she. He will not be in Heaven and leave her behind. And He will not enjoy a single privilege of Heaven without her being a sharer with Him. For all these reasons, then, you see it is clear why there should be the same power in the Believer as there was in Christ.

III. Well, WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES FROM ALL THIS? Two or threethey will only be hinted at, so do not grow weary. The first inference is thiswhat a marvelous thing a Christian is. A marvelous personage am I if I am a Believer in Christ. I am by doubting and fearing led to look down upon myself as despicablebut when I reflect that the Eternal has put His engraving tool upon meno, that He has exerted the whole of His Omnipotence in me and will continue to exert it till He brings me to HimselfLord, what is man? How strangely honored! How near have You brought him to Yourself, so that now there is no creature between God and man!

God firstman as a creature far distant but yet secondas an adopted and regenerated being, brought as near to God as a son is brought to a father. And who shall tell how near this may be? Lord, what a mighty thing can Your Grace make out of that poor crawling worm called man! How have You exalted him and made him to be higher even than principalities and powers! Let us love and bless God who has done this much for us.

Then, secondly, why should I doubt Gods power for others? If God has put forth so much power to save me, cannot He save anyone? The might which brought Christ from the dead and took Him to Heaven is such a tremendous power that it surely can bring the drunkard, the harlot, the blasphemer to Christ. Let me pray, then, for the chief of sinners. Let me encourage the vilest of the vile to believe in Jesus, for there is ability in Christ to save just such.

Again, why should I ever have any doubts about my ultimate security? Is this irresistible power engaged to save me? Then I must be saved. Does the devil vow that he will destroy me? Do my corruptions threaten to overwhelm me? Who can stay Omnipotence? Who shall come into the struggle with the Most High, or match himself with the Eternal? Aha! Aha! You enemies of my soul. I laugh you to scorn. If God is with us, who can be against us?

And lastly, how doleful the state of those who are not converted. See where you lieso dead, so helpless, so ruined, so undoneneeding nothing less than this eternal power to save you from the wrath to come! Ah, indeed I know this to be the case with many present here. Our preaching does you very little good. You come here in the morning and I know what you do in the afternoon. You would not be absent from listening to the mornings sermon, nor would you be absent from the evenings pleasure!

And when the Bible and the hymnbook have been put up, the newspaper will take the place. There are some who sit under our earnest appeals (and thank God they are earnest and often prevalent) and yet they are as unmoved as slabs of marble when oil runs down them. In a state of death and ruin are you. I see no human power that can help youin vain the minister, in vain the preaching. Your damnation is sure, you will go down to Hell and perish and that without mercy.

Yet gladly would I hope that God would have pity upon you yet. Still Christ is lifted up and, whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. If you can now believe in Christ, the mighty power of God is working in you. Trust Him now and you give the best evidence that Jesus irresistible might has been displayed upon you, as it was upon the Person of the King of kings. The Lord bless you with His mercy, for Christs sake. Amen.

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SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION   
NO. 127

A SERMON DELIVERED ON EASTER SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 12, 1857,   
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1.

IT might naturally be expected that I should have selected the topic of the Resurrection on what is usually called the Easter Sabbath. I shall not do sofor although I have read portions which refer to that glorious subject, I have had pressed on my mind a subject which is not the Resurrection of Christ but which is in some measure connected with itthe resurrection of lost and ruined man by the Spirit of God in this life.

The Apostle is here speaking, you will observe, of the Church at Ephesus and, indeed, of all those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, accepted in Him and redeemed with His blood. And he says of them, You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

What a solemn sight is presented to us by a dead body! When last evening, trying to realize the thought, it utterly overcame me. The thought is overwhelming that soon this body of mine must be a carnival for worms. That in and out of these places where my eyes are glistening, foul things, the offspring of loathsomeness, shall crawl! That this body must be stretched in still, cold, abject, passive deathmust then become a noxious, nauseous thing, cast out even by those who loved me, who will say, Bury my dead out of my sight. Perhaps you can scarcely, in the moment I can afford you, appropriate the idea to yourselves. Does it not seem a strange thing that you who have

walked to this place this morning shall be carried to your graves? That the eyes with which you now behold me shall soon be glazed in everlasting darkness? That the tongues which just now moved in song, shall soon be silent lumps of clay? And that your strong and stalwart frame, now standing in this place, will soon be unable to move a muscle and become a loathsome thingthe brother of the worm and the sister of corruption? You can scarcely get hold of the idea! Death does such awful work with usit is such a vandal with this mortal fabricit so tears to pieces this fair thing that God has built up that we can scarcely bear to contemplate its works of ruin!

Now, endeavor, as well as you can, to get the idea of a corpseand when you have done so, please understand that that is the metaphor employed in my textto set forth the condition of your soul by nature. Just as the body is dead, incapable, unable, unfeeling and soon about to become corrupt and putrid, so are we, if we are unquickened by Divine Grace! We are dead in trespasses and sins, having within us death which is capable of developing itself in worse and worse stages of sin and wickedness until all of us here, left by Gods Grace, should become loathsome beings! We are as loathsome through sin and wickedness, even as the corpse through natural decay! Understand that the Doctrine of the Holy Scripture is that man, by nature, since the Fall, is dead. He is a corrupt and ruined thing! In a spiritual sense he is utterly and entirely dead. And if any of us shall come to spiritual life, it must be by the quickening of Gods Spirit vouchsafed to us sovereignly through the good will of God the Father. Not for any merits of our own, but entirely of His own abounding and Infinite Grace!

Now, this morning I trust I shall not be tedious. I shall endeavor to make the subject as interesting as possible and also endeavor to be brief. The general Doctrine of this morning is that every man who is born into the world is spiritually dead and that spiritual life must be given by the Holy Spiritand can be obtained from no other source! That general Doctrine, I shall illustrate in rather a singular way. You remember that our Savior raised three dead persons. I do not find that during His lifetime He caused more than three resurrections. The first was the young maiden, the daughter of Jairus who, when she lay on her bed, dead, rose up to life at the single utterance of Christ, Talitha cumi! The second was the case of the widows son who was on his bier, about to be carried to his tomb. And Jesus raised him up to life by saying, Young man, I say unto you, Arise. The third and most memorable case was that of Lazarus, who was not on his bed, nor on his bier, but in his tomb! Yes, and corrupt, too! But notwithstanding that, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the voice of His Omnipotence, crying, Lazarus, come forth, brought him out of the tomb!

I shall use these three facts as illustrations of the different states of men, though they are all thoroughly dead. Secondly, as illustrations of the different means of Divine Grace used for raising them, though, after all, the same great agency is employed. And in the third place, as illustrations of the later experience of quickened men, for though to a great degree they are the same, yet there are some points of difference.

I. I shall begin by noticing, then, first of all, THE CONDITION OF MEN BY NATURE. Men by nature are all dead. There is Jairus daughter. She lies on her bed. She seems as if she were alive. Her mother has scarcely ceased to kiss her brow, her hand is still in her fathers loving grasp and he can scarcely think that she is deadbut she is dead as thoroughly dead as she ever can be! Next comes the case of the young man brought out of his grave. He is more than dead, he has begun to be corrupt, the signs of decay are upon his face and they are carrying him to his tomb. Yes, though there are more manifestations of death about him, he is no more dead than the other! He is just as deadthey are both dead and death really knows no degrees. The third case goes still further in the manifestation of death, for it is the case of which Martha, using strong words, said, Lord, by this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days. And yet, mark you, the daughter of Jairus was as dead as Lazarus, though the manifestation of death was not so complete in her case! All were alike dead. I have in my congregation some blessed beings, fair to look upon. Fair, I mean, in their character, as well as their outward appearance. They have about them everything that is good and lovely. But mark this, if they are unregenerate they are still dead! That girl, dead in the room, upon her bed, had little about her that could show her death. Not yet had the loving fingers closed the eyelids. There seemed to be a light still lingering in her eyes, like a lily just nipped off. She was as fair as life itself! The worm had not yet begun to gnaw her cheek, the flush had not yet faded from her face. She seemed well-near alive. And so is it with some I have here. You have all that heart could wish for, except the one thing necessary! You have all things save love to the Savior! You are not yet united to Him by a living faith. Ah, then, I grieve to say it, you are dead! You are dead! As much dead as the worst of men, although your death is not so apparent!

Again, I have in my presence young men who have grown to riper years than that fair damsel who died in her childhood. You have much about you that is lovely, but you have just begun to indulge in evil habits. You have not yet become the desperate sinner. You have not yet become altogether noxious in the eyes of other men. You are but beginning to sin. You are like the young man carried out on his bier. You have not yet become the confirmed drunkyou have not yet begun to curse and blaspheme God. You are still accepted in good society. You are not yet cast out. But you are dead, thoroughly dead, just as dead as the third and worst case! But I dare say I have some characters that are illustrations of that case, too. There is Lazarus in his tomb, rotten and putrid. And so there are some men not more dead than others but their death has become more apparent. Their character has become abominable, their deeds cry out against them! They are put out of decent society, the stone is rolled to the mouth of their tomb. Men feel that they cannot hold acquaintance with them, for they have so utterly abandoned every sense of right, that we say, Put them out of sight, we cannot endure them! Yet these putrid ones may live! These last are not more dead than the maiden upon her bed, though the death has more fully revealed itself in their corruption. Jesus Christ will quicken the one as well as the other and bring them all to know and love His name!

1. Now, then, I am about to enter into the details of the difference of these three cases. I will take the case of the young maiden. I have her here today. I have many illustrations of her present before me. At least, I trust so. Now, will you allow me to point out all the differences? Here is the young maiden. Look upon her. You can bear the sight. She is dead but oh, beauty lingers there. She is fair and lovely though the life has departed from her. In the young mans case there is no beauty, the worm has begun to eat him, his honor has departed. In the third case, there is absolute rottenness. But here, there is beauty still upon her cheek! Is she not amiable? Is she not lovely? Would not all love her? Is she not to be admired, even to be imitated? Is she not fairest of the fair? Yes, that she isbut God the Spirit has not yet looked upon her. She has not yet bent her knees to Jesus and cried for mercy. She has everything except true religion. Alas for her, alas, that so fair a character should be a dead one! Alas, my Sister, alas! That youthe benevolent, the kind one should yet be, after all, dead in your trespasses and sins! As Jesus wept over that young man who had kept all the Commandments and yet he lacked one thing, so I weep over you this morning! Alas, you fair one, lovely in your character and amiable in your carriagewhy should you lie dead? For dead you are unless you have faith in Christ! Your excellence, your virtue and your goodness shall avail you nothing! You are dead and dead you must be, unless He makes you live!

Note, too, that in the case of this maiden whom we have introduced to you, the daughter of Jairus, she is yet caressed. She has only been dead a moment or two and the mother still presses her cheek with kisses. Oh, can she be dead? Do not the tears rain on her, as if they would sow the seeds of life in that dead earth again?earth that looks fertile enough to bring forth life with but one living tear? Yes, but those salt tears are tears of barrenness. She lives not, but she is still caressed. Not so the young man. He is put on the bier. No man will touch him anymore, or else he will be utterly defiled. And as for Lazarus, he is shut up with a stone! But this young maiden is still caressedso it is with many of you. You are loved even by the living in Zion. Gods own people love you. The minister has often prayed for you. You are admitted into the assemblies of the saints, you sit with them as Gods people, you hear as they hear and you sing as they sing. Alas for you! Alas for you, that you still are dead! Oh, it grieves me to the heart to think that some of you are all that heart could wish, except that one thing, yet lacking that which is the only thing that can deliver you! You are caressed by us, received by the living in Zion into their company and acquaintance, approved of and accepted. Alas, that you should yet be without life! Oh, in your case, if you are saved, you will have to join with even the worst in saying, I have been quickened by Divine Grace, or else I had never lived.

And now will you look at this maiden, again? Note, she has no grave clothes on her. She is dressed in her own raimentjust as she retired to her bed a little sickso lies she there. Not yet have the napkin and the shroud been wrapped about her. She still wears the clothes of sleepshe is not yet given up to death. Not so the young man yonderhe is in his grave clothes. Not so Lazarushe is bound hand and foot. But this young maiden has no grave clothes upon her. So with the young person we wish to speak, this morning. She has as yet, no evil habits. She has not yet reached that point. The young man yonder has begun to have evil habits. And yonder gray-headed sinner is bound hand and foot by them. But as yet

she appears just like the livingshe acts just like the Christian! Her habits are fair, goodly and comely. There seems to be little ill about her. Alas, alas, that you should be dead, even in your fairest raiment! Alas, you who have set the chaplet of benevolence on your brow, you who do gird yourself with the white robes of outward purityif you are not born-againyou are still dead! Your beauty shall fade away like a moth. And in the Day of Judgment you will be severed from the righteous, unless God shall make you live! Oh, I could weep over those young ones who seem, at present, to have been delivered from forming any habits which could lead them astray but who are yet unquickened and unsaved. Oh, would to God, young Man and young Woman, you might in early years be quickened by the Spirit!

And will you notice, yet once more, that this young maidens death was a death confined to her chamber? Not so with the young man. He was carried to the gate of the city and many people saw him. Not so Lazarus. The Jews came to weep at his tomb. But this young womans death is in her chamber. Yes, so it is with the young woman or the young man I mean to describe now. His sin is as yet a secret thing, kept to himself as yet there has been no breaking forth of iniquity, but only the conception of it in the heart. Just the embryo of lust, not as yet broken out into act. The young man has not yet drained the intoxicating cup although he has had some whisperings of the sweetness of it. He has not yet run into the ways of wickedness, though he has had temptations thrust upon him. As yet he has kept his sin in his chamber and most of it has been unseen. Alas, my Brother! Alas, my Friend, that you who in your outward carriage are so good, should yet have sins in the chamber of your heart and death in the secrecy of your being which is as true a death as that of the grossest sinner, though not so thoroughly manifested! Would to God that you could say, And He has quickened me, for with all my loveliness and all my excellence, I was by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Come, let me just press this matter home. I have some in my congregation who I look upon with fear. Oh, my dear Friends, my muchloved Friends, how many there are among you! I repeat, they have all that the heart could wish except that one thingthey love not my Master! Oh, you young men who come up to the House of God and who are outwardly so good. Alas for you, that you should lack the root of the matter! Oh, you daughters of Zion, who are always at the House of Prayer! Oh, that you should yet be without Divine Grace in your heart! Take heed, I beseech you, you fairest, youngest, most upright and most honestwhen the dead are separated from the living, unless you are regeneratedyou must go with the dead! Though you are ever so fair and goodly, you must be cast away unless you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit!

2. Thus I have done with the first case. Now we will go to the young man, who stands second. He is not more dead than the other, but he is further gone. Come, now, and stop the bier. You cannot look upon him! Why, the cheek is sunkenthere is a hollowness there, not as in the case of the maiden whose cheek was still round and ruddy. And the eyesoh, what a blackness is there! Look on him, you can see that the gnawing of the worm will soon burst forth. Corruption has begun its work! So it is with some young men I have here. They are not what they were in their childhood, when their habits were proper and correct. But maybe they have just been enticed into the house of the strange woman. They have just been tempted to go astray from the path of rectitude. Their corruption is just breaking forththey disdain, now, to sit at their mothers apron strings. They think it foul scorn to keep to the rules that bind the moral! Theythey are free! They say they are and they will be free. They will live a jolly and a happy life. And so they run on in boisterous, yet wicked merriment and betray the marks of death about them! They have gone further than the maiden. She was still fair and comely, but here there is something that is the after-work of death. The maiden was caressed, but the young man is untouchedhe lies on the bier and though men bear him on their shoulders, yet there is a shrinking from him. He is dead and it is known that he is dead! Young man, you have got as far as thatyou know that good men shrink from you. It was but yesterday that your mothers tears fell fast and thick as she warned your younger brother to avoid your sin! Your very sister, when she kissed you but this morning, prayed to God that you might get good in this House of Prayer. But you know that of late she has been ashamed of you. Your conversation has become so profane and wicked that even she can scarcely endure it. There are houses in which you were once welcome where you once bowed your knees with them at the family prayer and your name was mentioned, too. But now you do not choose to go there, for when you go, you are treated with reservethe good man of the house feels that he should not let his son go with you, for you would contaminate him! He does not sit down now side by side with you as he used to do and talk about the best things. He lets you sit in the room as a matter of mere courtesy. He stands far away from you, as it were. He feels that you have not a spirit congenial with his own. You are a little shunned. You are not quite avoided. You are still received among the people of God, yet there is a coldness that manifests that they understand that you are not a living one.

And note, too, that this young man, though carried out to his grave, was not like the maiden. She was in the garments of life but he was wrapped in the cerements of death. So many of you have begun to form habits that are evil. You know that already the screw of the devil is tightening on your finger! Once it was a screw you could slip off or on. You said you were master of your pleasuresnow your pleasures are master of you! Your habits are not now commendable, you know they are not. You stand convicted while I speak to you this morning! You know your ways are evil. Ah, young Man, though you have not yet gone so far as the open profligate and desperately profane, take heedyou are dead! You are dead! And unless the Spirit quickens you, you shall be cast into Hell, to be the food of that worm which never dies but eats souls throughout eternity! And ah, young Man, I weep, I weep over you! You are not yet so far gone that they have rolled the stone against you. You have not yet become obnoxious. You are not yet the staggering drunkard, nor yet the blasphemous infidel. You have much that is ill about you, but you have not gone all the way yet! Take heed! You will go still furtherthere is no stopping in sin. When the worm is there, you cannot put your finger on it and say, Stop! Eat no more. No, it will go on to your utter ruin! May God save you, now, before you shall come to that consummation for which Hell so sighs and which Heaven can alone avert!

One more remark concerning this young man. The maidens death was in her chamber. The young mans death was in the city gates. In the first case I described, the sin was secret. But, young man your sin is not! You have gone so far that your habits are openly wicked. You have dared to sin in the face of Gods sun! You are not as some othersseemingly goodyou go out and openly say, I am no hypocrite. I dare to do wrong. I do not profess to be righteous. I know I am a rascal. I have gone astray and I am not ashamed to sin in the street. Ah, young Man, young Man! Your father, perhaps, is now saying, Would to God that I had died for himwould to God that I had seen him buried in his grave before he should have gone to such a length in wickedness! Would to God that when I first saw him and my eye was gladdened with my son, I had seen him the next minute smitten with disease and death! Oh, would to God that his infant spirit had been called to Heaven, that he might not have lived to bring in this way my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave! Your sport in the city gates is misery in your fathers house! Your open merriment before the world brings agony into a mothers heart! Oh, I beseech you, stop! Oh, Lord Jesus! Touch the bier this morning! Stop some young man in his evil habits and say to him, Arise! Then will he join with us in confessing that those who are alive have been quickened by Jesus, through the Spirit, though they were dead in trespasses and sins! 3. Now we come to the third and last caseLAZARUS DEAD AND BURIED. Ah, dear Friends, I cannot take you to see Lazarus in his grave. Stand, oh stand away from him! Where shall we flee to avoid the noxious odor of that reeking corpse? Ah, where shall we flee? There is no beauty there. We dare not look upon it. There is not even the gloss of life left. Oh, hideous spectacle! I must not attempt to describe itwords would fail meand you would be too much shocked. Nor dare I tell the character of some men here presentI would be ashamed to tell the things which some of you have done! This cheek might mantle with a blush to tell the deeds of darkness which some of the ungodly of this world habitually practice! Ah, the last stage of death, the last stage of corruption oh, how hideous! But the last stage of SINhideous far more! Some writers seem to have an aptitude for playing in this mud and digging up this miry clay. I confess that I have none. I cannot describe to you the lust and vice of a full-grown sinner. I cannot tell you what are the debaucheries, the degrading lusts, the devilish, the bestial sins into which wicked men will run when spiritual death has had its perfect work in them and sin has manifested itself in all its fearful wickedness! I may have some here. They are not Christians. They are not, like the young maiden, still fondlednor even, like the young man, still kept in the funeral procession. No, they have gone so far that decent people avoid them! Their very wife, when they go into the house, rushes upstairs to be out of the way. They are scorned. Such an one is the harlot from whom ones head is turned in the very street. Such an one is the openly profligate to whom we give wide quarters, lest we touch him. He is a man that is far gone. The stone is rolled before him. No one calls him respectable. He dwells, perhaps, in some back slum of a dirty lanehe knows not where to go! Even as he stands in this place, he feels that if his next door neighbor knew his guilt, he would give him a wide berth and stand far away from him, for he has come to the last stage. He has no marks of lifehe is utterly rotten!

And markas in the case of the maiden, the sin was in the chamber, secret. In the next case it was in the open streets, public. But in this case it is secret again. It is in the tomb, for you will mark that men, when they are only half gone in wickedness do it openlybut when they are fully gone their lust becomes so degrading that they are obliged to do it in secret. They are put into the grave in order that all may be hidden. Their lust is one which can only be perpetrated at midnight, a deed which can only be done when shrouded by the astonished curtains of darkness. Have I any such here? I cannot tell that I have many. But still, I have some. Ah, in being constantly visited by penitents, I have sometimes blushed for this city of London! There are merchants whose names stand high and fair. Shall I tell it here? I know it on the best authority and true, too! There are some who have houses large and tall, who on the exchange are reputable and honorable and everyone admits them and receives them into their societybut ah, there are some of the merchants of London who practice lusts that are abominable! I have in my Church and congregationand I dare to say what men dare to doI have in my congregation women whose ruin and destruction have been worked by some of the most respected men in respectable society! Few would venture on so bold a statement as that! But if you boldly do the thing, I must speak of it! It is not for Gods ambassador to wash his mouth beforehandlet him boldly reprove as men do boldly sin! Ah, there are some that are a stench in the nostrils of the Almightysome whose character is hideous beyond all hideousness! They have to be covered up in the tomb of secrecy, for men would ban them from society and hiss them from existence if they knew all!

And yetand now comes a blessed interpositionyet this last case may be saved as well as the first and as easily, too! The rotten Lazarus may come out of his tomb as well as the slumbering maiden from her bed. The lastthe most corrupt, the most desperately abominablemay yet be quickened and he may join in exclaiming, And I have been quickened, though I was dead in trespasses and sins. I trust you will understand what I wish to conveythat the death is the same in all cases, but the manifestation of it is differentand that the life must come from God and from God alone!

II. And now I will go on to another pointTHE QUICKENING. These three persons were all quickened and they were all quickened by the same Beingthat is by Jesus. But they were all quickened in a different manner. Note, first, the young maiden on her bed. When she was brought to life, it is said, Jesus took her by the hand and said, Maiden, arise. It was a still small voice. Her heart received its pulse, again, and she lived! It was the gentle touching of the handno open demonstrationand the soft voice was heardarise. Now, usually when God converts young people in the first stage of sin, before they have formed evil habits, He does it in a gentle manner. Not by the terrors of the Law, the tempest, fire and smoke. He makes them like Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she received the Word. On such, it drops like the gentle dew from Heaven upon the place beneath. With hardened sinners Divine Grace comes down in showers that rattle on them. But in young converts it often comes gently. There is just the sweet breathing of the Spirit. They perhaps scarcely think it is a true conversion, but true it is, if they are brought to life.

Now note the next case. Christ did not do the same thing with the young man that he did with the daughter of Jairus. No. The first thing He did was He put His hand, not on him, mark you but on the bier. And they that bore it stood still, and after that, without touching the young man, He said in a louder voice, Young man, I say unto you, Arise! Note the differencethe young maidens new life was given to her secretly. The young mans was given more publicly. It was done in the very street of the city. The maidens life was given gently by a touch. But in the young mans case it must be done, not by the touching of him, but by the touching of the bier. Christ takes away from the young man his means of pleasure. He commands his companions, who by bad example are bearing him on his bier to his grave, to stop. And then there is a partial reformation for a while and after that, there comes the strong out-spoken voiceYoung man, I say unto you, Arise!

But now comes the worst case. And will you please, at your leisure, at home notice what preparations Christ made for the last case of Lazarus? When He raised the maiden, He walked up into the chamber, smiling and said, She is not dead, but sleeps. When He raised the young man, He said to the mother, Weep not. Not so when He came to the last case. There was something more terrible about thatit was a man corrupting in his grave. It was on that occasion you read, Jesus wept, and after He had wept, it is said that, He groaned in His Spirit. And then He said, Take away the stone. And then there came the prayer, I know that You hear Me always. And then, will you notice, there came what is not expressed so fully in either of the other cases. It is written, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! It is not written that He cried with a loud voice to either of the others. He spoke to themit was His word that saved all of them. But in the case of Lazarus, He cried to him in a loud voice! Now, I have, perhaps, some of the last characters here the worst of the worst. Ah, Sinner, may the Lord quicken you! But it is a work that makes the Savior weep. I think when He comes to call some of youfrom your death in sinwho have gone to the utmost extremity of guilt, He comes weeping and sighing for you. There is a stone to be rolled awayyour bad and evil habitsand when that stone is taken away, a still small voice will not do for you. It must be the loud crashing voice, like the voice of the Lord which breaks the cedars of LebanonLazarus, come forth! John Bunyan was one of those rotten ones. What strong means were used in his case! Terrible dreams, fearful convulsions, awful shakings to and froall had to be employed to make him live! And yet some of you think, when God is terrifying you by the thunders of Sinai, that really He does not love you. It is not soyou were so dead that it needed a loud voice to arrest your ears!

III. This is an interesting subjectI wish I could dilate upon it but my voice fails me. And, therefore, permit me to go to the third point very briefly. THE LATER-EXPERIENCE OF THESE THREE PEOPLE WAS DIFFERENTat least you gather it from the commands of Christ. As soon as the maiden was alive, Christ said, Give her meat. As soon as the young man was alive, He delivered him to his mother. As soon as Lazarus was alive, He said, Loose him and let him go. I think there is something in this. When young people are converted who have not yet acquired evil habitswhen they are saved before they become obnoxious in the eyes of the worldthe command is, Give them meat. Young people need instruction, they need building up in the faith. They generally lack knowledge. They have not the deep experience of the older man or woman. They do not know as much about sin, nor even as much about salvation as the older man that has been a guilty sinner. They need to be fed. So our business as ministers, when the young lambs are brought in, is to remember the injunction, Feed My lambs. Take care of them, give them plenty of meat! Young People, search after an instructive minister! Seek after instructive books. Search the Scriptures and seek to be instructedthat is your principal business! Give her meat.

The next case was a different one. He gave the young man up to his mother. Ah, that is just what He will do with you, young man, if He makes you live. As sure as ever you are converted, He will give you up to your mother again. You were with her when you first, as a baby sat on her knee. And that is where you will have to go again. Oh, yes, Divine Grace knits together again the ties which sin has loosed. Let a young man become abandonedhe casts off the tender influence of a sister and the kind associations of a motherbut if he is converted, one of the first things he will do will be to find the mother and the sister and he will find a charm in their society that he never knew before! You that have gone into sin, let this be your business, if God has saved youseek good company. Just as Christ delivered the young man to his mother, so you seek after your mother, the Church! Endeavor as much as possible to be found in the company of the righteous for as you were carried before to your grave by bad companions, you need to be led to Heaven by good ones.

And then comes the case of Lazarus. Loose him and let him go. I do not know how it is that the young man ever was loosened. I have been looking through every book I have about the manners and customs of the East and have not been able to get a clue to the difference between the young man and Lazarus. The young man, as soon as Christ spoke to him, sat up and began to speak. But Lazarus, in his grave clothes, lying in the niche of the tomb, could do no more than just shuffle himself out from the hole that was cut in the wall. And then stand leaning against it. He could not speak. He was bound about in grave clothes. Why was it not so with the young man? I am inclined to think that the difference lay in the difference of their wealth. The young man was the son of a widow. Very likely he was only wrapped up in a few common things and not so tightly bound about as Lazarus. Lazarus was of a rich familyvery likely they wrapped him up with more care. Whether it was so or not, I do not know. What I need to hint at is thiswhen a man is far gone into sin, Christ does this for himHe breaks off his evil habits. Very likely the old sinners experience will not be a feeding experience. It will not be the experience of walking with the saints. It will be as much as he can do to pull off his grave clothesto get rid of his old habits. Perhaps to his death he will have to be taking off bit after bit of the cerements in which he has been wrapped. There is his drunkenness. Oh what a fight will he have with that! There is his lust. What a combat he will have with that for many a year! There is his habit of swearinghow often will an oath come into his mouth and he will have as hard work as he can to thrust it down again! There is his pleasure-seekinghe has given it upbut how often will his companions be after him to get him to go with them? His life will be ever afterwards a loosening and letting go, for he will need it till he comes up to be with God forever and ever!

And now, dear Friends, I must close by asking you this question have you been quickened? And I must warn you thatgood, bad, or indifferentif you have never been quickened, you are dead in sins and must be cast away at the last! I must bid you, however, who have gone the furthest into sin, not to despair. Christ can quicken you as well as the best. Oh, that He would quicken you and lead you to believe! Oh, that He now would cry to some, Lazarus, come forth! and make some harlot virtuous, some drunk sober! Oh, that He would bless the Word, especially to the young and amiable and lovely, by making them now the heirs of God and the children of Christ!

And now but one thing I have to say to those who are quickened. And then adieu this morning and may God bless you! My dear Friends, you who are quickened, let me advise you to be aware of the devil. He will be sure to be after you. Keep your mind always employed and so you will escape him. Oh, be aware of his devices! Seek to keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. The Lord bless you, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2267 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LIFE FROM THE DEAD   
NO. 2267

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JULY 31, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 13, 1890.

And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1.

OUR translators, as you observe, have put in the words, has He quickened, because Paul had thrown the sense a little farther on and it was possible for the reader not to catch it. They have but anticipated the statement of the fourth and fifth versesGod, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ.

Here is the point. God has quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins, spiritually dead. We were full of vigor towards everything which was contrary to the Law of God or the holiness of Godwe walked according to the course of this world, but as for anything spiritual, we were not only somewhat incapable and somewhat weakened, but we were actually and absolutely dead. We had no sense with which to comprehend spiritual things. We had neither the eyes that could see, nor the ears that could hear, nor the power that could feel.

We were dead, all of us, and yet we were not all like one another. Death may be universal over a certain number of bodies and yet those bodies may look very differently. The dead that lie on the battlefield, torn by dogs or birds, rotting, corrupting in the sunwhat a horrible sight! The corpse still looks like life, yet your beloved one in the coffin is as dead as the mangled bodies on the battlefield. Corruption has not yet done its work and tender care has guarded the body from what will surely come to it, yet there is deathsure, complete deathin the one case as well as in the other.

So we have many who are lovely, amiable, morally admirable, like he whom the Savior looked upon and loved, yet they are dead for all that. We have others who are drunks, profane, unchastethey are dead, but not more dead than the othersit is only that their death has left its terrible traces more plainly visible. Sin brings forth death and death brings forth corruption! Whether we were corrupt or not is not a question that I need to raise herelet everyone judge concerning himself. But dead we were, most certainly. Even though trained by godly parents, though well instructed in the Gospel scheme, though saturated with the piety that surrounded us, we were dead, as dead as the harlot of the street, as dead as the thief in the jail.

Now, the text tells us that though we were dead, yet Christ has come and, by His Spirit, He has raised us out of the grave. This text brings us Easter tidings! It sings of resurrection! It sounds in our ears the trumpet of a new life and introduces us into a world of joy and gladness. We were deadbut we are quickened by the Spirit of God! I cannot help stopping a minute to know whether it is so with you, my dear Hearers, and praying that what I might have to say act as a kind of sieve, separating between the really living and those who only think that they are alive, so that, if you have not been quickenedif you are only a child of nature, finely dressed, but not spiritually aliveyou may be made aware of it. If you have been quickened, even though your life is feeble, you may cry to the living God with the, Abba, Father, which never comes from any lips but those which have been touched and quickened by the Holy Spirit!

I. First, let us talk a little about OUR QUICKENING. You who have been quickened will understand what I say. To those who have not, I daresay it will seem as an idle tale.

Well, dear Friends, if we have been quickened, we have been quickened from above. You has HE quickened. God, Himself, has had dealings with us. He has raised us from the dead! He made us at the first and He has new-made us! He gave us life when we were born, but He has given us, now, a higher life which could not be found anywhere else. He must always give it. No man ever made himself to live. No preacher, however earnest, can make one hearer to live. No parent, however prayerful, no teacher, however tearful, can make a child live unto God. You has HE quickened, is true of all who are quickened! It is a Divine spark, a Light from the great central Sun of Light, the great Father of Lights. Is it so with us? Have we had a Divine touch, a superhuman energy, a something which all the learning and all the wisdom and all the godliness of man could never work in us? Have we been quickened from above? If so, I daresay that we remember something of it! We cannot describe itno man can describe his first birthit remains a mystery. Neither can he describe his new birththat is still a greater mystery, for it is a secret inward work of the Holy Spirit, of which we feel the effect, but we cannot tell how it is worked.

I think that, usually, when the Divine Life comes, the first consciousness that we get of a quickening is a sense of pain. I have heard that when a man is nearly drowned, while he lies under the power of death, he feels little or nothingperhaps even has pleasurable dreamsbut when, in the process of restoring him, they have rubbed him till the blood begins to flow and the life begins to revive a littlehe is conscious of pricking and great pain. One of the tokens that life is coming back to him is that he wakes up out of a pleasant sleep and feels pain! Whether it is so or not with every person restored from drowning, I do not know, but I think that it is so with every person restored from drowning in the river of sin! When the life begins to come to him, he feels as he never felt beforesin that was pleasant becomes a horror to him! That which was easy to him becomes a bed of thorns. Thank God, dear Hearer, if you have living pangs! It is an awful thing to have your conscience hardened, as in the very fires of Hell, till it becomes like steel. To have consciousness is a great mercy, even if it is only painful consciousness and if every movement of life within seems to harrow up your soul. This Divine Life usually begins with pain.

Then, everything surprises you. If a person had never lived before and had come into life a full-grown man, everything would be as strange to him as it is to a little childand everything is strange to a new-born man in the spiritual realm into which he is born. He is startled a hundred times! Sin appears as sinhe cannot understand it. He had looked at sin, before, but had never seen it to be sin. And Christ now appears so glorious to himhe had heard of Christ, before, and had some apprehensions of Himbut now he is surprised to find that the One who he said had no form nor comeliness is, after all, altogether lovely! To the new-born soul, everything is a surprise. He makes no end of blunders. He makes many miscalculations because everything is new to him. He that sits upon the Throne says, Behold, I make all things newand the renewed man says, My Lord, it is even so. One said to me, when joining the Church, Either I am a new creature, or else the world is altogether altered from what it was. There is a change somewhere. And that change is from death to life, from darkness into Gods marvelous Light!

Now, as life comes thus with strange surprises, and mingled with pain, so, dear Friends, it comes often with many questions. The child has a thousand things to askit has to learn everything. We little think of the experiments that children have to go through before they arrive, even, at the use of their eyes. They do not know that things are at a distancethey have to learn that fact by looking many times. So long as the object falls upon the retina, the child is not aware of whether it is distant or a near object till some time later. What you think that you and I knew from our birth, we did not knowwe had to learn it. And when a man is born into the Kingdom of God, he has to learn everything and, consequently, if he is wise, he questions older and wiser Believers about this and about that. I pray that you who are instructed and have become fathers never laugh at babes in Grace if they ask you the most absurd questions. Encourage them to do so! Let them tell you their difficulties. You, by Gods Grace, are a manthis little one is but a new-born babehear what he has to say.

You mothers do this with your little children. You are interested, you are pleased, you are amused with what they say. Thus ought instructed saints to deal with those who have been newly quickened. They come to us and ask, What is this? What is that? What is the other? It is a time of asking, a time of enquiring! It is well, also, if it is a time of sitting at Jesus feet, for there is no other place so safe to a new-born Believer as the feet of Jesus! If he gets to the feet of anybody else, he is apt to get ill-instructed at a time when everything warps his judgementwhen he is exceedingly impressionableand not likely to forget the mistakes that he has made if he has borrowed them from others. So you see what the Divine Life does when it comes into the soul. It comes to us with pain. It gives us many surprises. And it suggests a large number of questions.

We begin, then, to make a great many attempts at things which we never attempted before. The new-born child of God is just like the newborn child of man in some things and, after a time, that child begins to walk. No, it does notit begins to crawlit does not walk first. It creeps along, pleased to make any kind of progress, and when it gets up on its little feet, it moves from one chair to another, trembling at every step it takes and, presently, down it goes! But it gets up, again, and so it learns to walk.

Do you remember when the new life came into you? I do. I remember the first week of that new life and how, on the second Sabbath, I went to the place where I had heard the Gospel to my souls salvation, thinking that I would attend there. But, during that week, I had made a great many experiments and tumbled down a great many times, and the preacher took for his text, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thought, Yes, I know all about thatthat is my case. When the preacher said that Paul was not a Christian when he wrote those words, though I was only seven days old in Divine things, I knew better than that, so I never went there again! I knew that no man but a Christian could ever or would ever cry out against sin with that bitter wail! And I knew that if the Grace of God was not with him, he would have rested satisfied and contentbut if he felt that sin was a horrible thing and he was a wretched man because of it and must be delivered from itthen he surely must be a child of God, especially if he could add, Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, we make many mistakes and we shall continue to do so. At the same time, we learn by our experiments. You remember when you began to praywould you like to have your first prayer printed? I believe that God liked it better than many of the collects! You might not like it so wellit would not look well in print. You remember when you first began to confess Christ to a friend? Oh, you stuttered and stammered over it! There were more tears than words. It was not a dry discourseyou wet it well with tears of grief and anxiety. That was the new life putting forth powers with which it was not, itself, acquainted, and I believe that there are some of Gods children who have powers that they will never find unless they try to use them! I should like some of you young men who do not pray at the Prayer Meeting to make a start. And some of you older men, perhaps, have never preachedbut you might if you triedI wish you would. I would break down, one says. I wish you would! A breakdown sermonthat breaks the preacher downmight break the people down, too! There might be many advantages about that kind of discourse.

This, then, was the way in which the new life, spiritual life, came into us. We did not know what it was when it came. We had never felt like that before. We could not think that we had really passed from death to life and yet, in looking back, we are persuaded that the throes withinthe anguish of heart, the longing, the pleading, the wrestling and the crying would never have been in a dead heartbut were the sure marks that God had quickened us and we had passed into newness of life!

II. Now, secondly, let us think of OUR PRESENT LIFE. You has He quickened. Well, then, we have a new life! What is the effect of this life upon us? I speak to you who are quickened by Grace.

Well, first, we have become now conscious towards God. The unconverted man lives in Gods world, sees Gods works, hears Gods Word, goes up to Gods House on Gods Dayand yet he does not know that there is a God! Perhaps he believes that there is because he was brought up to believe it. But he is not cognizant of GodGod has not entered into himhe has not come into contact with God.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I think that you and I can say that to us the surest fact in all the world is that there is a God! No God? I live in Him! Tell a fish in the sea there is no water! No God? Tell a man who is breathing that there is no air! No God? I dare not come downstairs without speaking to Him! No God? I would not think of closing my eyes in sleep unless I had some sense of His love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit. Oh! one says, I have lived 50 years and I have never felt anything of God. Say that you have been dead 50 yearsthat is nearer to the mark! But if you have been quickened by the Holy Spirit 50 minutes, this would have been the first fact in the front rank of all factsGod is, and He is my Father, and I am His child! Now you become conscious of His frown, His smile, His threat, or His promise! You feel HimHis Presence is photographed upon your spirityour very heart trembles with awe of Him and you say with Jacob, Surely God is in this place. That is one result of spiritual life.

Now you have also become sympathetic with similar life in others. You have a wide range, for the life of GodHis life in His new-born childis the same life that is in every Christian! It is the same life in the new-born Believer as in yonder bright spirits that stand before the Throne of God. The life of Christ, the life of God, is infused into us in that moment when we are quickened from our death in sin. What a wonderful thing it is to have become sympathetic with God! What He desires, we desire. His glory is the first objective of our being. He loves His Son and we love His Son. We desire to see His Kingdom come as He does and we pray for His will to be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven. We wish that death did not remainthe old nature hampering usbut in perfect proportion as the new life is really in us, we now run parallel with God. The holiness which He delights in we aspire after. Not with equal footsteps, but with tottering gait we follow in that same path that God has marked out for Himself. My soul follows hard after you; Your right hand upholds me.

The new life that made us sympathetic with God, holy angels, holy men and with everything that is from above, has also made us capable of great pleasure. Life is usually capable of pleasure, but the new life is capable of the highest conceivable pleasure! I am certain that no ungodly man has any conception of the joy which often fills the Believers spirit. If worldlings could only know the bliss of living near to God and of basking in the light of His Countenance, they would throw their wealth into the seaand 10,000 times as muchif they might but get a glimpse of this joy that can never be bought, but which God gives to all who trust His dear Son! We are not always alike. Alas! We are very changeable, but when God is with uswhen the days are spiritually bright and long and we have come into the midsummer of our heavenly blisswe would not change places with the angels, knowing that, by-and-by, we shall be nearer to the Throne of God than they are and, while they are Gods honored servants, yet they are not beloved sons as we are! Oh, the thrill of joy that has sometimes gone through our spirits! We could almost have died with delight at times when we have realized the glorious things that God has prepared for them that love Him! This joy we never knew till we received the new life.

But I must add that we are also capable of acute pain to which we were once strangers. God has made our conscience quick as the apple of the eye. He has made our soul as sensitive as a raw wound so that the very shadow of sin falling on the Believers heart will cause him great pain and, if he does go into the actual sin, then, like David, he talks about his bones being broken and it is not too strong a figure of the sorrow that comes upon the believing heart when sin has been committed and God has been grieved. The heart, itself, then, is broken and bleeds at thousands of wounds! Yet this is one of the results of our possessing the new life and I will say thisthe sharpest pang of spiritual life is better than the highest joy of carnal life! When the Believer is at his worst, he is better than the unbeliever at his best! The Believers reasons for happiness are always transcendently above all the reasons for joy that worldlings can ever know.

Now, dear Friends, if we have received spiritual life, you see what a range of being we havehow we can rise up to the seventh Heaven or sink down into the abyss. This new life makes us capable of walking with Godthat is a grand thing! We speak of Enoch walking with God and we look at the holiness of his life. But did anybody ever think of the majesty of his life? How does God walk? It needs a Milton to conceive of the walk of God! But he that has the Divine Life walks with Godand sometimes he seems to step from Alp to Alp, from sea and ocean, accomplishing what, unaided, he would never even attempt! He that has the Divine Life is lifted up into the infinitieshe gets to hear that which cannot be heard and see that which cannot be seenfor, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, when He has given us the new life!

One effect of this Divine life is to put life into everything that we do. They tell me that creeds are dead. Yes, yes! It is a pleasant thing to hear an honest confessionthey are dead to dead men! I hold nothing as the Truth of God that I can put away on a shelf and leave there. My creed is part of my being! I believe it to be true and, believing it to be true, I feel its living force upon my nature every day! When a man tells you that his creed is a dead thing, do not deny it for a minutethere is no doubt of the fact. He knows about himself better than you do. Oh, dear Friends, let us never have a dead creed! That which you believe, you must believe up to the hilt! Believe it livingly, believe it reallyfor that is not believed at all which is only believed in the letter, but is not felt in the power of it!

If you have been quickened by the Spirit of God, your prayers are living prayers. Oh, the many dead prayers that are heard at the bedsideso many good words rushed through at a canter! He that is alive unto God asks for what he needs and believes that he shall have itand he gets it. That is living prayer. Beware of dead prayers! They are a mockery to the Most High. I do not think that a living man can always pray by clockwork, at such a time and such a timethat would be something like the ministers sermon which he got up beforehandand upon which he wrote in the margin weep here, or, here you must show great emotion. Of course that was all rubbishit cannot be done to order! You cannot resolve to groan at one oclock and weep at three oclock. Life will not be bound like that!

I love to have an appointed season for prayer and woe unto the man who does not have his time for prayer! But, at the same time, our living prayer bursts out hours before the appointed time, or sometimes it will not come at the time! You have to wait till another season and then your soul is like a hind let loose. Why, sometimes we can pray and prevail, and come off conquerorsand at another time, we can only bow at the Throne and groan out, Lord, help me; I cannot pray; the springs seem to be all sealed. That is the result of life! Living things change. There are some persons in St. Pauls CathedralI have not seen them, lately, but I have seen them. When I lived in the country I came up to look at the notabilities in St. Pauls Cathedral. I have heard that they have never had a headache in the last hundred years! They have had no rheumatic pains, nor have they been troubled with the gout, The reason is that they are cut in marble and they are dead! But a living man feels the fog and the winds. He knows whether it is an east wind or a west wind that is blowing. Before he gets up in the morning, he begins to feel, sometimes, lively, and sometimes ill. He does not understand himself. Sometimes he feels merry and can sing hymns. At another time he can do nothing else but sigh and cry, though he scarcely knows why! Yes, life is a strange thingand if you have the Life of God in your soul, you will undergo many changes and not always be what you want to be.

If we are alive unto God, every part of our worship should be living. What a deal of dead worship there is! If we go on with our services in regular routine, a large number of our friends find it difficult to stay awake. I fear that some people go to a place of worship because they get a better sleep there than anywhere else. That is not worship which consists in doing as Hodge did, when he said, I like Sunday, for then I can go to Church, put my legs up and think of nothing at all. That is all the worship a great many render to Godjust getting to a place of worship and there sitting still and thinking of nothing at all. But if you are a living child of God, you cannot do that! If, sometimes, through the infirmity of the flesh, you fall into that state of slumber, you loathe yourselves for it! And you rouse yourself up and say, I must worship my God; I must sing, I must praise God. I must draw near to Him in prayer.

III. I must come to my third point, for our time flies. Notice what OUR PRESENT POSITION IS if God has quickened us.

Our present position is this, first, that we are raised from the dead. He has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together. We cannot live where we used to live. We cannot wear what we used to wear. There is nobody here who would like to go and live in a grave. If you have been raised from the dead, after you had been buried in Norwood Cemetery, I would guarantee you that you would not go there to sleep tonight! So the man who has once been raised by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit quits the deadhis old company does not suit him. If you had been raised from the dead and had come out of your tomb, you would not go about London streets with your shroud on! You are a living man! How is it that I find some who say they are people of God but are rather fond of wearing their grave clothes? I mean that they like the amusements of the world. They like to put on their shroud, sometimes, just for a treat. Oh, do not do it! If God has made you to live, come away from the dead! Come away from their habits, manners and customs! Life sees no charm in death. The living child of God likes to get as far as he can away from the death that once held him bound. Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. That is the first part of our position that we have come to live a separate life, now, and have quit the path we trod before.

Next to that, we are one with Christ. He has quickened us together with Christ, and has raised us up together. I told you just now that the life which the Holy Spirit gives us when we are born again is the Life of God. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, but, of course, in a modified sense, but still in a true sense. The life everlasting, the life that can never die, is put into us, then, even as Christ said, The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The Believers life is the Life of Christ in the Believer! Because I live, you shall live, also. What a mystic union there is between the Believer and his Lord! Realize that! Believe in it! Rejoice in it! Triumph in it! Christ and you are now one and you are made to live together with Him! God grant you to know the joy of this condition!

Once more, we are told, He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is very wonderful! We have not only left the dead and become joined to Christ, but we are made to sit in Heaven with Christ. A man is where his head is, is he not? And every Believer is where his Head is. And if we are members of Christs body, we are in Heaven! It is a very blessed experience to be able to walk on earth and look up to Heaven. But it is a higher experience to live in Heaven and look down on the earthand this is what the Believer may do! He may sit in the heavenliesChrist is there as his Representative. The Believer may take possession of what his Representative is holding on his behalf. Oh, to live in Heaven, to dwell there, to let the heart be caught up from this poor life into the life that is above! This is where we should bewhere we may be if we are quickened by the Divine Life!

One thing more and I have done. We are in this position, that God is now working in us, through this Divine Life, to make us the most wonderful reflectors of His Grace that He has yet formed. He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. The ages to come will have for their wonder the quickened children of God! When God made the world, it was a wonder, and the angels came from afar to see His handiwork. But when Christ makes the new creation, they will say no more that God made the Heaven and the earth, but they will say in higher strains, He made these new-born men and women! He made for them, and in them, new heavens and a new earth.

Ah, Beloved, It does not yet appear what we shall be. God has given us a life that is more precious than the Kohinoor, a life that will outlast the sun and moon! When all things that are shall be like an old oceans foam which dissolves into the wave that bears it and is gone forever, we shall liveand we shall live in Christ and with Christ, glorified forever! When the moon has become black as a sackcloth of hair, the life that is within us shall be as bright as when God first gave it to us! You have the dew of your youth, O child of God, and you shall have yet more of it! You shall be like your Lord when He shall take you away from every trace of death and the corrupt atmosphere of this poor world! And you shall dwell with the living God in the land of the living forever and forever!

The practical outcome of all this is that some of you do not know anything at all about it. If you do not, let the fact impress you. If there is a Divine Life to which you are a stranger, how long will you be a stranger to it? If there is a spiritual death and you are dead, be startled, for within a little while God will say, Bury My dead out of My sight. And what will happen to you when the Word of God is, Depart, depart, depart, depart, and unto the graveyard of souls, to the fire that never shall be quenched, you and the rest of the dead are taken away? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living and, unless we are made alive unto Him, He cannot be our God either here or hereafter! The Lord impress this solemn Truth on all your hearts by His own Spirit, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON   
**EPHESIANS 2.**

Verse 1. And you He has quickened. Is it so? Could the Apostle say that to you and to me?   
1. Who were dead in trespasses and sins. Look back to what you used to be, to the hole of the pit from where you were liftedYou has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.   
2. Wherein in time past you walked. With a terrible activity of spiritual death.   
2. According to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. He makes them to be his forge. There he blows his coals, there he fabricates his instruments. Do you not hear the noise of the infernal bellows when the children of disobedience swear and use unclean language? Ah, such were some of us, but we are cleansed! The evil spirit has been driven out and he no more works in us.   
3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. You that now commune with God at the Mercy Seat, you that are now His favored children and have received power to become the sons of Godyou were once heirs of wrathBy nature the children of wrath, even as others. Holy Scripture is not complimentary to unrenewed human nature. You may search it through and through to find a single flattering word to unregenerate man, but you will search in vain! This style of speech is left to those who ignore Divine Inspiration. They draw their inspiration from another fountainfrom a desire to walk according to the course of this world according to the Prince of the power of the air. They can use flattering speeches in addressing the ungodly, but the Holy Spirit never does.

4, 5. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins. God loved us even when we were dead in sins. His love does not depend upon what we areit flows from His own heart. It is not love of something good in usit is love of us because of everything good in Him! Here you see the greatness of His Grace, in that, He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.   
5. Has quickened us together with Christ. Ah, That accounts for everythingtogether with Christ. When we get together with Christ, then are we made alive, then are we saved! Are you, my dear Hearers, quickened together with Christ?   
*5-7.* (By Grace you are saved), and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. See how Pauls language grows and swells and rises as he proceeds! Just now, we read of God, who is rich in mercy. Now the Apostle speaks of the exceeding riches of His Grace, exceeding expression, exceeding comprehension, exceeding, even, sin, itself, though that is all but infinite. The exceeding riches of His Grace are infinity, itself! But they all come to us through Christ Jesus. Paul will speak of nothing good except that which comes through Christ Jesus. This is the one conduit through which the streams of Living Water flow to the dead in sin. Gods Grace comes to us Through Christ Jesus, and through Him, alone.   
8. For by Grace are you saved through faith. We have this expression, by Grace are you saved, twice over in this chapter. Paul knew that he needed to repeat himself, or people would forget what he taught. At bottom, all the wanderings from the faith at the present day amount to this salvation by works instead of salvation by Grace. The battle of the Reformation has to be fought over again! Men are justified by Grace through faith in Christ Jesus. All the enmity of natural men is against that Truth of God. They want to be saved by their own morality and all sorts of things that they put instead of salvation by Grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.   
8, 9. And that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. Oh! said one to me just now, the man who is saved by his own righteousness cannot do much in the line of praising. No, my dear Brother, I replied, except he praises himselfand he can generally do that pretty well. Your self-made man usually worships his creator very earnestlyand your selfsaved man glorifies him that saved him.   
10. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. Nothing without Christ Jesus, you see. The mark of the pierced hand is on everythingWe are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.   
10. Unto Good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. God has decreed that He will have a holy people. This is His purpose, His ordinance to which He will always stand. He will make it good. He will make sinful people holy and disobedient people obedient to the faith.  
11. Therefore remember, that you, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. Remember what you were. You were not the chosen Israelites, you have not the Covenant mark in your flesh.   
12. That at that time you were without Christ. Which is the worst state of all, far worse than being without circumcision.   
12. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. Outsiders, rank outsiders, far away from any rights, or any participation in the rights of Gods children.  
12. And strangers from the Covenants of promise. Utter strangers to the Covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.   
12. Having no hope, and without God in the world. It is an awful description, but a truthful description of what we were.   
13. But now. The Apostle has turned over a new leaf in the book of our historybut now. Oh, what a change from the past to the present! But now   
13. In Christ Jesus. See how Paul keeps harping on that one string? Note how he links us with Christ Jesus. There is nothing for us without Christ and His Cross.   
13. You who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. Paul can never have too much of Christ. It is Christ, Christ, Christ, Christlike the harp of Anacreonshe wished to sing of Cadmus, but his harp resounded love, alone. And so the harp of Paul resounds with Christ, aloneChrist, alone! He always comes back to that theme. It was said of one eminent commentator that he could not find Christ in the Scripture where He was. But it was said of Cocceius that he found Christ where He was not. I would rather find Christ where He is not, than not to find Him where He is! There are plenty who err in that second direction, nowadays.   
14. For He is our peace. Paul cannot do without Christ, you see. He will bring Him in everywhere.

14. Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. There is no longer the division between Jews and Gentiles.

15. Having abolished in His flesh. See, it is always ChristHis flesh, His blood, His life! There must always be something about HimHaving abolished in His flesh.

15. The enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace; and that He. I cannot help reminding you that you must not overlook the fact that Paul will not go a hairs breadth away from Christ.

16-18. Might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. There is the whole Trinity in that one verse! Christ, the Spirit, the Father. It needs the Trinity to make a Christian! And when you have got a Christian, it needs the Trinity to make a prayer! You cannot pray a single prayer aright without Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

19. Now, therefore. Another of Pauls blessed, nows. It was, but now, a little while ago. Now he has another now. Now therefore   
19. You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. You are not only in the Kingdom, but you are in the royal household, which is still better! You are princes of the blood imperial! You are peers of the court of Heavenand the household of God.   
20. And are built. You are not loose stonesyou are built   
20, 21. Upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; in whom. You see, it is always that, in Him, in Christin whom   
21. All the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. There is no Church without Christ, no temple without Him as its Cornerstone, its Priest, its Glory.   
22. In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And all this hangs upon that first sentence, You has He quickened. Is it so, Beloved? If you are spiritually dead, nothing here belongs to you. But if He has quickened you, you may take every single sentence of the chapter and say, That is mine, and glory be to the Grace of God!

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK463, 476, 461. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2388 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ONCE DEAD, NOW ALIVE   
NO. 2388

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1894.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1888.

And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1.

I PREACHED to you, this morning, [Sermon #2046, Volume 34 Consolation from Resurrection Read/download entire sermon at http://www.spurgeongems.org .] the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead and its various bearings. But unless you have experienced spiritual resurrection, you do not understand that doctrine and you cannot grasp its meaning. Spiritual resurrection may be understood in theory, but it cannot be really comprehended until we, ourselves, have been raised out of spiritual death. Always remember that in the things of God, knowledge is only to be gained by personal experience. If you would understand regeneration, you must be born again. If you would understand faith, simple as it is, you must, yourselves, believe.

Tonight I want to give you another exposition of spiritual quickening as it is described in my textAnd you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. There are three things about which I am going to speak to you. First, you were dead. Secondly, some of you have been quickened. And, thirdly, of those of you who have been quickened, it can be truly said that you are now alive.

I. First, then, YOU WERE DEAD.   
I think that I must, in imagination, take you into that death chamber. The blinds are all drawn, there is a great hush about the room. Here is a coffin covered with a white clothturn it back, gently, and stand with meand look at the person who lies sleeping there. He is dead. Alas, there is woe in the family, for the brother is dead. Here is the terribly true picture of what we were by natureI mean, what we all wereand what many still are. God grant that they may be delivered from this sad condition!

To find out what spiritual death means, I shall ask you to remember that this dead body, here, is characterized by an absence of sense. Be not afraid, it is your brother man. Come close to him and speak. He does not hear you. Speak more loudly. He does not answer you, he gives no sign of recognition. Shout at the very top of your voicestoop down and speak into his ear. Alas, it is the clay-cold ear of death upon which no effect whatever is produced! I remember when I was spiritually just like that. I could not hear, even, the voice of Jesus, though it was very soft and tender. He said, Come unto Me, but I did not respond to His call. There were others near me who did, but I was dead and took no notice. Then there came a louder sound, a voice of threatening, a message of condemnation! God spoke from the top of Sinai and hurled at me the ten great thunderbolts of His Law. But I still did not hear. I had broken all those commands and I must bear the penalty of disobediencethe Law told me so, but I did not hear. Friends led me, sometimes, dead as I was, where both the Law and the Gospel were fully preached, but I did not hear. I

could not hear. Sounds went past the drums of my ears and my body heard, but the ear of my heart was not reached. I could not hear, for I was dead.

Let us see if our friend in the coffin can see. Here, lift up the coffin lid, wave a lighted candle before his eyes. Pull up that blind, let in the sunlight. He does not see and he cannot see. There are none so blind as the dead. And there was a time with meand I use myself sorrowfully as an examplewhen I could not see. I could not see my Lord, I could not see His love, I could not see His bleeding heart, I could not see His thorncrowned head. I saw no beauty in the Altogether Lovely One. I was wrapped up in my own worldly pleasure and in myselfand I was not alive unto God. Ah, me, this is, indeed, deathto be unable to hear or to see!

Can this dead body perceive anything by smelling? Here, bring that smelling bottle and place it close to the mans nostrils. It contains the strongest volatile salts that would make the tears come to some of our eyesbut it does not affect him. Burn the rarest incense, fill the chamber with the smoke, yet he recognizes nothing as to what sweet perfume is in the room. And well do I remember when my mother told me that there had been much unction about the sermon and my father said that the Lord was there, and that it was as when one breaks a box of ointment and the house is filled with the sweetest odorsbut I declare to you that I discerned nothing of its fragrance! There was, to me, no spiritual sweetness, no subtle delight about the doctrines of the Gospel, for I was dead!

Perhaps this man may have lost the power of sight, hearing and smelling, but yet he may be alive. Let us see if he has any sense of taste. Bring here the most nauseous drug, or give me gall and wormwood, and I will put a few drops on his lips. These things are not loathsome to him! Now let us try sugar and honey and all things that are luscious and sweet. Evidently you might as well lay these things upon a slab of marble, for the dead man has no taste for them! It was just so with me spiritually. I knew not, in those days, the sweetness of the Gospel of Christ, nor even the bitterness of sin. I had no taste, for I was deadand that is what you all were, my Brothers and Sisters! That is what some are who are sitting at your side in the pewdeadhaving no taste for heavenly joys.

But, perhaps, after all, these senses may be gone and yet life may remain. Let me see if the man can feel. Let me press his hand very gently. No, he does not press mine in return. I will stoop down and kiss the face of this, my brother, but there is no smile upon his countenance, though he would have smiled in other days. He is dead. He can feel nothing of pain or joy. It is a dreadful thing to be sitting in Gods House as, perhaps, some of you are, feeling nothing whatever! I would give my eyes, no, I would give even my life to save this company if I knew how to speak so as to reach mens hearts! But there is no mode of human language that can make a dead heart live, or make a stony heart to beat with the pulsations of life. This comes from another and a higher Power than mine. But, apart from the operations of the Spirit of God, all are, by nature, dead, and this is what some of you are even now, spiritually dead and, therefore, devoid of holy senses.

There is another test that we may apply to see if there is an absence of desire. I will speak to this dead man and say, Friend, you lie here deaddo you know it? You who cannot feel, or hear, or seedo you wish to live? Do you desire to live? There is no answer to my question. But I can tell you that because he is dead, he does not even desire to liveand this, too, is the state of many spiritually. They have not any wish after heavenly things. You are quite content if you have money enough to pay your way, or if you have enough to enjoy yourself at the theater, or in some worldly gaiety. But as for God, Christ and Heaventhese may all go as far as you are concerned. You have no desire for them, you are deaddead to the very things for which men were made to live, and by which, alone, men do live! You are dead and you have no desire after life.

Shall I speak to the corpse, again? It is no use, for the man has no senses and no desire. Beside that, there is an absence of power. Has not this man the power to get life, the power to do something good? I lift his handit drops down powerless. I try the other handit is no sooner up than it falls down, again. It is evidently useless to attempt to force him to any action, for he is without power. We, also, were without strength. Oh, how can this dead man live if he can do nothing towards making himself alive? I will tell you that, by-and-by, but, meanwhile, this is an essential part of deaththat the man is without strength.

Further, in those who are naturally or spiritually dead there is an absence of fellowship with the living. If this man cannot do anything for himself, let us get him up and dress him! Come here, good woman, you who washed him, come, and put on his best clothes and make him sit up. It was not long ago that we saw the picture of a dead emperor lying dressed in his warriors garments. So dress this man up in his Sunday suit and let him sit at the table with his wife and children! You shudder at the suggestion and tell me that it is impossible. Yet the Egyptians set a skeleton at their feasts, so as to remind themselves of deathand it was not altogether unwise. But if I had my choice of a place at the table, I would not elect to have our bony friend next to me! And I think that if the dead were seated at our festivals, we would all naturally shrink from that part of the table.

Thus you can see what death does spirituallyit shuts you out of fellowship with the living people of God. You were in a room, the other night, where there were half-a-dozen Christian people and you said to yourself, This is about the dullest evening I have ever spent. You went to a service, the other day, where there was much prayer, and you made fun of it when you came away, it was so dreary to you. Yes, of course it was, and if you were condemned to go to Heavenno, I have not made a mistake, I mean what I sayif you were condemned to go to Heaven, it would be a Hell to you! You would not be able to endure that constant praise of God, that perpetual adoration of Him which is the occupation of the blessed! You would have no heart for that. Let me out, you would say, I had rather go to my own place than stay here. Thus, you see, you are dead. And the dead are shut out from fellowship with the living.

Then, once more, there are tokens of decay. We will not take this man from the coffinwe will let him lie there. Look at him. It is now four days since he was pronounced dead. I noticed, when I came into the room just after his death, that his face looked, perhaps, more sweet than it did during his lifetime. It often happens that when the time of the extreme pain which brought on death has come altogether to an end, the face seems to regain its former sweetness which was obliterated by the pain, and the man looks more beautiful than before. And often the countenance appears restful, though the heart, before death, was full of anguish. Yes, but that was a little while after death when I noticed this sweet expression of face. How is it with the corpse four days, five days, say, six days after death? Ah, me, come, Undertaker, nail this coffin lid downit is not meet that any other eyes should look at this ghastliness, or that anyone else should see these tokens of decay!

It is just so spiritually. The young man who is dead in sin, may, under his mothers care at home, look very beautiful. There may be no trace of spiritual death about him. You might think himand he may think himselfbetter than a great many Christians! Have I not heard him say that it is so? But give him time to show what he really is! Bring him to Londonplace him in a large warehouse. Let him go out in the evening and let there be nobody to meet him but the strange woman. Ah, within how short a time the destructiveness of horrible sin may be seen in his character! Could that fond mother, who sent him from her fireside comparatively pure, see what he has become, she might almost say, Bury him out of my sight! This is the way we were all going to decay till our Lord Jesus appeared to us and stopped the corruption by dethroning Death and putting spiritual life into us through faith in Himself!

I think, perhaps, I have said enough on this part of my subject, so I will not take you back to the death chamber.   
II. Now, in the second place, dear Friends, to all who have believed in Christ it can be truly said, YOU HAVE BEEN QUICKENED. So the text says, You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.   
Do you remember how that happened? I can only speak about myself in such a matter as this, because one man cannot enter into anothers experience, but I think that what I see in myself, you have seen in yourselves, you who are alive unto God. There came a time when I began to live! I remember it wellI not only remember when the new life first came into my soul, but I can distinctly recall the first effect of it. I am told that when a man has been drowning and he begins to return to consciousness, when they rub him back to conscious life, the first sensation is that of exquisite pain as the blood begins to flow, again, in the channels in which it had been latent.   
When the life-blood began to flow in my heart spiritually, it gave me nothing but pain. I was lost and I felt that it was so. I was not dead, was I, if I felt? Then I heard the Gospel, and I did hear it, too, with awful distinctness! I remember to have had, on one occasion, a slight deafness, and when the surgeon had attended to my ears and I went into the street, I wished myself deaf again, for all the noises were so dreadful to my ears, so intense was every little sound! We ought to thank God that we do not hear more than we doif we heard more, we would not hear anything at allwe would hear so much that the different sounds would not convey any meaning to our mind! So was it with me, I heard too much. The thunder of the Law of God deafened me and when I heard the voice of the Savior, it seemed to say, You have rejected Me and I have left you to perish! The door of mercy is now shut and will not be opened to you. I began to feel what sin really was and to realize that I could not escape from itand that a just God must punish me! Yet I consented to the punishment, dreadful as it was, and confessed that I did not wish the Lord to be unjust even to save me. This was the tremendous terror of my statethat I had received a living consciousness of what was right, and sided with the rightyet all the while felt that the righteous Judge condemned me!

What happened after that? Being quickened and having felt this pain, after a while I woke up as out of an awful sleep and I seemed to say to myself, Where am I? I had been born into a new world! Some of you know the egg-shell of this poor sinful world, but you do not know the real life of it. A man may go dreaming on through this world, seeing the sun, moon, stars and all things that are visible, but he may never have discovered the true life which is invisible. So it was with me. If, all of a sudden, this lamp, here, could be made into a living thing, it would be a strange change for it to find itself alive in the midst of this crowd of people, where it has stood so long a poor, dead, metallic thing! There was some such change as that worked in meI thought that if the world was not new, I was! Something wonderful had happened to me! I can tell you that I had a sort of twist that day and I have never got over itand I have no wish to get over it!   
Everything seemed different to me. I looked at all things through new eyes and heard with new ears and, somehow, I discovered what I had never dreamed of, for I talked to God! Christ was near me! His Spirit was within me! I saw living men and women in this new world and I began to wish to get among them and would have been glad to have washed the feet of any of them so long as they would but permit me to be in their company! I remember that experience. Do you? We must all have felt something like that if we have really been born from above!  
And then, being thus alive, we had to learn everything. You see, a person just born into the world and knowing nothing is like a newborn infant. I suppose that when an infant first sees, it cannot measure distances. It does not know whether a thing is close to it, or far away. All that the eyes can bring to it seems flat at the first. Mothers do not always reflect how little their children knowand how all the things that we know as a matter of course were really learned by experience. Once we did not understand much, just like babies that do not, at first, comprehend what is said to them, and could not reply even if they understood. There are a few simple words, or syllables, by which they speak to mother and fatherand you are very pleased when they are able to say themand you talk of it to one another as a great achievement when baby has uttered a whole sentence!   
I have heard you and I remember doing the same thing, myself. It is so natural for us to like to hear the first words of our children. That is just how it was with God and ourselves spirituallywe had everything to learn. We were alive, but we did not know much. We were rather puzzled by some of our big Brothers and Sisters, but our heavenly Father accepted our broken utterances and our oft-mistaken words. We did see, though we did not know much about the laws of perspective. We did hear, though we did not understand music and harmony. We did feel and that was a proof that we were alive. Oh, what a mercy that was!   
Very soon, we began to have new needs. Do you remember that experience? We felt a new hungerwe had never had that while we were dead. We needed to feed on the Truth of God! Do you remember when you went to hear a certain popular preacher deliver one of his wonderful sermons and everybody else spoke of it as, splendid, but you said to yourself, I do not know what there was in it, but certainly I did not get any food for my soul? Another time, you were taken to hear a plain, simple minister who talked about Jesus and His love, and others exclaimed, He is a poor preacher, with no name, and no fame, but you said, I do not know how it is, but I am satisfied with the feast I have had, I feel as if I had been sitting at the Kings banqueting table. Ah, Gods people know the difference between flowers and fruit! They know the difference between meat and mere plate, spoon and forkand they are not to be deceived! You remember when you began to hunger and to thirst, and oh, when you drank your first draught of the Living Water, you could not make out what it was! You see, you had been dead, and all these things were new to you. What was hunger? What was thirst? How did you come to have such sensations? You never hungered after Christ, you never thirsted after the Gospel while you were dead in sin! But now you have many things that are quite new to younew fears, new cares, new doubts, new aspirations.   
Let me remind you that you also had new joys. Your heart began to dance at the sound of Christs name! You never danced at the sound of that name while you were dead, but when you had received spiritual life, that dear name had all the music of Heaven in it when it rang in your ears, and your heart responded, Jesus, precious Jesus

*No musics like Your charming name,*

*Nor half so sweet can be.*   
Oh, what rapture you had in those early days! You went forth with joy and were led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills broke forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field clapped their hands! That delight has not gone from you now, has it? You are still happy in the Lord, you can sing as joyously as ever

*Oh happy day, that fixed my choice*

*On You, my Savior, and my God!   
Well may this glowing heart rejoice   
And tell its raptures all abroad!*

You see how it is with you nowlife has brought you, as a new creature, into a new worldold things have passed away, behold, all things have become new! So far, I hope that many have been able to follow me.

II. Now comes the closing point and I must say only a few words upon it, for I should like you to sing a verse of Happy Day, before we separate. The third division is YOU ARE NOW ALIVE. Yes, as many as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are spiritually alive! Does not He say, He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live?

You are spiritually alive. Very well, then, do not go back to the grave. It was a madmans taste to go and live in a cemetery. The demoniac from the country of the Gadarenes had his habitation among the tombs and, surely, nobody in his right mind would think of having such an abode as that! If you are alive, do not go and live in the grave. Sometimes a person says to me, Tell me, Sir, may I go to such and such a place of amusement? When I hear the name of it, I say, Well, if you want to go, go. If you are dead, go and be buried with the deadwe do not need any dead souls among the living in Zion. If that sort of thing is to your taste, go and enjoy it. But if you are a child of God, it will not be your taste. If you are alive from the dead, you will not want to go and live in a morgue. I once was in a place where there were said to be at least ten thousand skulls heaped up, one above another, from floor to ceiling. I should think that there must have been quite that number, and as I walked along through those rows of skulls, every one of them seeming to be grinning at me, I did not ask to be allowed to stay there all night! So, he that is spiritually alive does not wish to dwell with sinners in ungodliness! Their merriment would be his misery. That which is their delight would cause him the most exquisite pain. Let me get out of this, he would say, this is no place for me. To chain a living man to a skeleton would be a horrible tormentdo not, I pray you, be chained to a dead man, or a dead woman, eitherand do not seek your company among the dead. You are alive! Therefore, do not go back to the tomb.

Next, you are alive, therefore, do not be carried on a bier. I have seen living men carried about on biers. Here is a man who has long heard the good old-fashioned Gospel, but, the other day he met with a believer in evolution, one of the monkey-worshippers of whom I told you last Thursday night, [Sermon #2056, Volume 34Idols Found Wanting, But Jehovah Found FaithfulRead/download entire sermon at http://www.spurgeongems.org .] whose father is not in Heaven, but up a tree! Oh! said the foolish man, as he listened to the heresymonger, this evolution theory is a very wonderful thing! And so three or four of them bore him off on a bier, carried him away from the Truth of God as it is in Christ. Of course, if the man is dead, the proper place for him is on a bier! But you are alivetherefore you know what the dead do not and, I pray that you may know it from the sole of your feet to the crown of your head, and stand up for the Truth of God, defend it valiantly, and not be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine, just as if you were only a stray straw in the street! Know what God has taught you and be prepared to live by it, and to die for it, if need be! You are alive, therefore, be alive for the Truth of God and be not carried away on a bier.

Further, you are alive, therefore, do not be wrapped up in grave clothes. Have you any on now? I should not wonder if you have. There is a piece of red stuff that many living persons still wearit is called, bad temper. Oh, get rid of that fragment of grave clothes, I entreat you! It smells of the tomb! The Lord help you to be sweet, gentle and meek! Do not wear your old grave clothes, now that you are alive from the dead! Were you covetous? Were you lustful? Were you false? Get rid of all these grave clothes. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit may sanctify youspirit, soul and bodytill you are clean delivered from these cerements of the sepulcher! Lazarus came out of the tomb with his grave clothes on, but the Savior said, Loosen him and let him go, and they took the napkin from his head, the winding sheets from about his body and the man was free. Do not go about in a winding sheet! Put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man. The Lord help you so to do!

You are alivethen another exhortation is, get up and work. You are alive unto God. Are you so alive that you mean to sit down and take it quietly? Are you going to Heaven in an easy chair? You have climbed up the Gospel coach, sat down on the box seat and you say that you mean to sit there as long as you live? Oh, you good-for-nothing wretch! Do not talk about being saved! Why, you are not yet saved from selfishness! When we are really saved, we begin to love other people as well as to love God and we desire with all our might to spend and to be spent in the Lords service. You do not suppose that the Lord Jesus Christ came here to be a lackey to the lazy, do you? We are

not saved by works, but if we have not works, we are not saved! We are saved by Grace, but Grace makes us a people zealous for good works! God grant that this purpose of mercy may be fulfilled in each one of us who was dead, but is now alive!

You are alive, now, therefore glorify Him who quickened you. If I had lived in the days of our Lord, I would have liked, if it had been possible, to have had a cup of tea with Lazarus. I think that I would have asked him down to my house and would have said to him, Lazarus, tell me all about your resurrection. You were dead and your sisters buried you, and Martha said to the Lord Jesus, By this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days. Tell me, did you really hear that voice that said, Lazarus, come forth, and did you know the sweet tones of the dear Masters call? Were you dead and did that sound bring life with it? How did you feel when you found yourself lying on that cold stone shelf in the sepulcher, and when the light came streaming in where there had been a stone, before, to shut it out? Do you remember how you felt when you shuffled out and came from the sepulcher all wrapped up in the grave clothes? Oh! Lazarus would say, my dear Brother, I cannot tell you much about these things, but I remember that the first thing I saw, when they took the napkin off my eyes, was that blessed Man, my Lord and my God! And I knew that He had raised me from the dead, and I felt that I could lie at His feet and die again of overwhelming love! I loved Him so for He had raised me from the dead! Do not talk about me, speak about Him! Go forth and preach about Him to others, wherever you have an opportunity! Say that He raised me from the dead, that He can raise others from the dead, and He can make death yield up all his spoils, through the power of His resurrection life!

That is what I want all you, who are spiritually alive, to dogo forth and tell what Jesus has done in raising the dead to life!   
I have finished when I have said just this word to the unsaved. Trust Jesus. Trust Him now! Come to Him, now, even by one gracious stride of faith, for He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Ephesians 4.*

Verse 1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you. Paul puts force into the argument by his manner of speaking. You can hear in his words the rattle of his chains! Here is a man who, for Christs sake, has lost his liberty and who, for that reason, pleads with his fellow Christians. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you

1. That you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. Do not dishonor the good cause. Let not your lives bring disgrace upon Christif you are called Christiansbe Christians.

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. This is the very spirit of Christianityto be able to bear and forbear, to be gentlenot to be selfish or self-seeking, or angry and passionate, but full of lowliness and meekness. Brothers and Sisters, do not seek the highest place! If you do, you will at least have a contested election, for many want that position. But if you choose the lowest place, you shall have it, and nobody will try to run in opposition to you. There is always plenty of room in the lowly places and there is peace there! Let me whisper to youthey are really the highest places in the Church of God! If we will go down, we shall ascend! But if we are striving to be greatto be masterfulwe shall not gain the ends we are seeking and we shall not honor our Master.

3. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That is a living ligature which binds the members of the body together. Try to keep in one spirit, united by the bond of peace.

4. There is one body. Christ never had two.  
4. And one Spirit. There never were two Holy Spirits. The one Spirit that quickened the whole Church of Christ is by Himself, alone.   
4. Even as you are called in one hope of your calling. You have only one ground of confidence and you have only one Heaven in which you hope to meet all your fellow Believers.   
5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. There is only one Lord in the Christian Church! And there is only one faith. There may be many forms of faith, but there is only one true faith. One baptism. There may be many baptisms, so-called, but there can be only one that is the true baptism.

6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. So that if we are one in all these things, we ought to be one in a hearty affection towards one another!

7. But unto every one of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. That is, to every one of us who are members of His mystical body. The living members of the living body receive according to each ones function and place in the body a measure of Grace for the benefit of the whole.

8-10. Therefore He says, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same, also, who ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things). When He received gifts for men, and gave them to men, what did He give?

11. And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. Different gifts to different races.   
12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. The early Church could not have been without Apostles and we cannot do without Evangelists. May the Lord send many faithful men who will range over the whole country preaching the Word! Neither can we do without pastors and teachers and it is idle to attempt to do so. Would God we had many more of the sort that Jesus gives! Those whom men make are worth nothing, but those whom Jesus gives are worth everything!   
13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. When all Christian people shall be well developed, mature, then the whole body of Christ will come unto the stature of a perfect man. When will that be? There are some who are always looking for the perfect Church of Christ, but they have not seen it, yet. When Eve was in the making, Adam did not see herit was only when she was complete that she became visibleand today the real Church of Christ is only in the making! When she has been fashioned out of the side of Christ, then she will be presented to Him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. All the various agencies which God has appointed are working together for the fashioning of this perfect body of the Church.   
Meanwhile, it is equally true that all Believers are intended to grow unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Some of them are, in spiritual things, only like children of a span long. Others are but as boys and girls in the streets of Jerusalem, while some are halfdeveloped men and women! Oh, that we could all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! You know how the sergeants stand the recruits against a wall and then measure them to see whether they are up to the army standard. Now stand upright and see whether you have come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Alas! How very short we are! Oh, that we could grow! Spirit of God, make us more like Christ!   
14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. There are plenty of socalled Christians of that sort, nowadays, who are too weak to know anything for themselves. They are not settled and groundedthe last person who comes near them and pulls their ear a little hard, turns their head his way. The next person who will pull their ear a little harder, will turn their head another way! Be no longer children, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, but be men and womenknow what you knowhold it with the tenacious grip of a Divinely-implanted faith and God help you to escape from those who lie in wait to deceive!  
15, 16. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Every part of the body supplies something that is essential to the whole. There are certain sacs and vessels, the use of which we cannot tell. Even the best anatomist does not know what are their uses, but he does know that if they are not there, health cannot be maintained and, in some instances, life, itself, would expire if some vessel, quite insignificant, should be taken away! Let us believe that all Gods people are essential to the completion of the body of Christ and that all the workers and all the sufferers, too, are needed to make up the Church of which Christ is the Head.  
17-19. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feelingThat is a dreadful condition for anyone to reach! Let us pray to God to save us from that terrible state of heart!   
19. Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Oh, dear Friends, we must come away from everything that is impure and unclean! May we never, by any conduct of ours, give countenance to unchastity and impurity! Christian people must be clear of these things!   
20-25. But you have not so learned Christ; if so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members, one of another. They who lie in jest will find out that God puts it down as sinning in earnest. Let us never attempt to deceive. In the East, in olden times, and I might say as much of the present day, it was not usually reckoned a great sin to liethe great evil was when the liars were discovered. Oh, but the Christian man must be true in every word that he speaks. He must faithfully keep his promises and be known to be a trustworthy, reliable man. If you are not true, Christ will not acknowledge you as belonging to Him.

26. Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath. If ever angry, be only angry with evil and never retain anger in your heart. It must not last more than a day. They say that a wasps sting dies at night, so, let every resentful thought die away as the sun sets.   
27. Neither give place to the devil. He will knock at your door and try to get in, but do not offer him a chair. If he forces his company upon you, let him know he is not welcome!   
28. Let him who stole steal no more. If he has only been a petty pilferer, Let him who stole steal no more. He that steals a pin will one day steal an ox if he can.   
28. But rather let him labor. If he must have something that he does not at present possess, this is the way to get itnot by stealing itbut by laboring for it.   
28. Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. Observe that our trade must be a right one, not one that injures othersWorking with his hands the thing which is good. But what a remarkable verse this is! A man has been a thief and he is to go and get to work! What for? To supply his own necessities? Yes, but he is to rise to something higher than that! He is to work that he may have, to give to him that needs. What changes the Grace of God makes in a man! He who once took from other people is taught to work that he may give to other people! This is, indeed, a turning of things the right side uppermost.   
29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Do not utter a dirty or corrupt word, no, though it has a merry jest appended to it, do not speak it! He pares his apple who would cleanly feed, is a good proverb. Take away all that is corrupt about the story.   
29. But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers. What sweet talking there would be if we all spoke in this wayto minister Grace unto the hearers! Ah, then, my dear Friends, it would not matter how much we talked, if every word were salted with salt.   
30. But grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. The Holy Spirits being in you is your seal that you are the child of Godand the power by which you will be preserved till the resurrection! Therefore, do not grieve that blessed Spirit.   
31, 32. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be you kind, one to another. Kind is a good old Saxon word! It means kinned. Be you kind, like men who are akin to one anotherlook on all men as your brothers!   
32. Tenderhearted, forgiving one another. You will have something that will need to be forgiven, and your brother will have something which you will need to forgive.   
32. Even as God, for Christs sake, has forgiven you. The Lord write all these words upon our hearts, for Christs sake! Amen.

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Sermon #3198 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE AND ARE   
NO. 3198

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1910.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23, 1873.

And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ephesians 2:3.

**The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:16, 17.**

[See Sermon #339, Volume 6THE SONS OF GODRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THESE two texts will furnish me with two familiar but most important themeswhat Christians were and what they are. There are great and vital differences between what they once were and what they now areand these are implied or indicated by the two expressions, the children of wrath and, the children of God. There is so much instruction in each of our texts that we will proceed at once to consider them without any further introduction.

I. So, first, let us consider WHAT CHRISTIANS WERE.   
The Apostle tells us that we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. By nature, mark you, not merely by practice, but, by nature the children of wrath. The expression is a Hebraism. When a person was doomed to die, he would be called by the Jews, the child of death. One who was very poor would be called by them, the child of poverty. So because we were, by nature, under the wrath of God, we are called the children of wrath.   
When the Apostle says that we were by nature the children of wrath, he means that we were born so. David expressed what is true of us all when he said, Behold, I was shapened in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Our first parent, Adam, sinned and fell as the representative of the whole human race. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. If any object to this principle of representation, that does not affect its truth of itand I would also remind them that by this very principle of representation, a way was left open for our restoration! The angels did not sin representativelythey sinned personally and individuallyand, therefore, there is no hope of their restoration, but they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. But men sinned representatively, and this is a happy circumstance for us, for as by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. As we fell through one representative, it was consistent with the principles upon which God was governing mankind that He should allow us to rise by another Representative! At first, we fell not by our own fault, so now, by Grace, we rise not by our own merit. Death by sin came to us through Adam when we were born, so did life come to us through Christ Jesus. Thus our first text sets before us this terrible factas true as it is terrible, and as terrible as it is truethat we were by nature under the wrath of God from the very first. The whole race of mankind was regarded by God as descended from a disgraced traitor! We were all born children of wrath.   
This expression also implies that there was within us a nature which God could not look upon except with wrath. The way in which some cry up the excellence of human nature is all idle talk. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Everything that is evil lurks within the heart of everyone that is born of a woman! Education may restrain it, imitation of a good example may have some power in holding the monster down, but the very best of us, apart from the Grace of God, placed under certain circumstances which would cause the evil within us to be developed rather than restrained, would soon prove to a demonstration that our nature was evil, and only evil, and that continually! You may take a bag of gunpowder and play with it if you care to do so, for it is quite harmless as long as you keep the fire from it, but put just one spark of fire to it and then you will discover the force for evil that was latent in that innocent-looking powder! You may tame a tiger if you begin training it early enough. And you may treat it as if it was only a big catbut let it once learn the taste of blood and you will soon see the true tiger nature flashing from its eyes and seeking to destroy all that come within reach of its cruel claws! In a similar fashion to that, sin was originally latent within everyone of us and whatever better qualities God may, by His Grace, have planted there, it is still true that we were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others.   
I need not say any more about the original sin of Adam, or about the sinfulness of our nature, for those of us who have been saved know that our practice was according to our nature. Who can deny that the fountain was defiled when he is compelled to confess that polluted streams flowed from it? Can you look back with complacency upon the days of your unregeneracy? I feel sure that you cannot think of the sins that you committed, then, without weeping over them, and especially sorrowing over that sin which so many forgetthe sin of not believing on the Son of God, the sin of so long rejecting the Savior, the sin of not yielding to the gentle calls of His Grace, the sin of bolting and barring the door of your heart while He stood outside and cried, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew and My locks with the drops of the night. But we would not rise and let Him in! What a horrible sin it was not to see the loveliness of Christ and not to admire the infinitude of His love! Had we not been sinful by nature and by practice, too, our opposition or our indifference would have been melted concerning the coming of Jesusand we would have at once opened our hearts to receive Him.   
Not only were we children of wrath by descent, by nature and by practice, but had not God, in His long-suffering patience, spared us until we were converted, we would have had to endure the wrath of God forever in that dark realm where not a single ray of hope or one cooling drop of consolation will mitigate the miseries of any child of wrath who hears the dread sentence, Depart from Me; I never knew you. We cannot bear even to think of the doom of those who have died impenitent! I confess that my flesh creeps when I read those terrible Words of the Lord Jesus concerning the worm that never dies and the fire that never shall be quenched. And yet, instead of sitting in these seats at this moment, rejoicing in the good hope through Grace, we might have been there! Yes, and without any very great change in the order of Gods Providence before our conversion, we might have been there! We were sick with the fever and if only the disease had taken an unfavorable turn, we would have been there! We were shipwreckedand if only the waves had washed us out to sea instead of washing us up upon a rockwe would have been there! Possibly some of us have been in battle and as, every bullet has its billet, if one had found its billet in our brain or heart, we would have been there! Some of us have been in many accidentsif one of them had been fatal before we knew the Lord, we would have been there! All of us are in jeopardy every day and every hourwe are constantly being reminded of the frailty of human life, yet God spared us, by His Grace, and did not cut us off, as so many others were, while we were unrepentant and unregenerated. Had He done so, we would, indeed, have been the children of wrath in the most terrible of all senses, for we would even now have been enduring the wrath of God on account of our sin! Children of God, as you realize the truth of what I have been saying to you, I trust that you will feel intensely grateful to the Lord who has so graciously interposed on your behalf and delivered you from going down into the Pit!

Notice also that Paul says that we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Gods Grace has made a great difference between His children and others, but there was no such difference originally they were the children of wrath, even as others, that is, in the same sense as others were children of wrath. I know that Gods children have been from eternity the objects of His distinguishing love, for there never was a period when He did not love those whom He had chosen as His own. But regarding us as sinners, unforgiven sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, we, were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.   
We were also the children of wrath, even as others who remain unconverted. You have, perhaps, a daughter for whose conversion you have long prayed. You have brought her to hear the Gospel since she was a child, but up to the present moment, it has not touched her heart. Do not forget that you, also, were a child of wrath, even as she is. You have a friend who ridicules the Gospel, even though he comes with you to listen to it. Yet you were an heir of wrath, even as he isand if it had not been for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, you, also, would have been only a hearer and not a doer of the Word. You would have been like so many others in this congregation and you might have said, with Cowper  
*I hear, but seem to hear in vain.   
Insensible as steel.*   
But you are not insensible as steel now! You feel the power of the Word. It makes you tremble, but it also makes you rejoice, for you know that it is the Word of your Father in Heaven who has loved you with an everlasting love and who, therefore, with loving kindness has drawn you to Himself. While you remember all this with devout gratitude to Him who has made you to differ from others and also to differ from what you, yourself, used to be, never forget that you were once a child of wrath, even as others still are!   
Yes, Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you were by nature the children of wrath, even as others who still revel in sin. As you pass along the street you see such sights and hear such language that you are shocked and horrified that men and women can so grievously sin against the God who made them, and who still permits them to live! Yet do not look down upon them with an affectation of superior holiness and say, What shameful sinners those people are in comparison with us! But rather say, We, too, were by nature the children of wrath, even as others still are.   
Yes, and to emphasize what I have previously said, we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others who pass away impenitent and in due time must stand before the Judgment Bar of God! They will stand shivering before that Great White Throne whose spotless luster will reveal to them, as in a wondrous mirror, the blackness of their lives and the guiltiness of their impenitence! And when the King sits down upon His Throne, even though it will be the Lamb, Himself, who died for sinners, who will sit as their Judgethey will cry to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the Great Day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? There is nothing so terrible to look upon as injured love. Fiercer than a lion leaping upon its prey is love when once it is incensed. Oil flows smoothly, but it burns furiouslyand when the love of Jesus has been finally rejectedthen the sight of Him whose head was once crowned with thorns will be more terrifying than anything else to the eyes of those who have rejected Him. They will wish they had never been born and, indeed, it would have been better for them if they had never had an existence! Had it not been for the Grace of God, their portion would also have been our portion, for by nature we were the children of wrath even as they wereand amidst that shivering, trembling crowd we would have taken our station. But, believing in Jesus, our place shall be at His right hand when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe. We shall be among those to whom the King will then say, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Yet, by nature, we were the children of wrath, even as others.   
II. Now I must turn from that sad, solemn knellChildren of wrath, even as others, to the joyous peal that rings out from our second text which tells us WHAT CHRISTIANS AREwhat we now are if we have believed in JesusThe Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.   
It is such a wonderful thing that those who were the children of wrath should now be the children of God and that there are two witnesses to it. First, our own spirit says that we are the children of God and then the Holy Spirit comes and says, Yes, and I also bear witness that you are the children of God.   
Now, Beloved, do you realize that God has worked this great miracle of mercy in you? Does your spirit bear witness that you are now a child of God? When you go out of this building and look up at the stars, will you say to yourself, My Father made them all? Will you feel that you must talk to your Father? And when you go to your bed tonight, should you lie sleepless, will you begin to think of your heavenly Father as naturally as a little child, when it lies awake in the dark, thinks of its mother and calls to her? If you are a true Believer, this is the case with you. The Spirit of adoption is given to you by which you are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Do you not also know what it is, sometimes, when you are sitting down quietly by yourself, to think, The God who made the heavens and the earth, and who upholds all things by the Word of His Father, is my Father? Then very likely a flood of tears will come as you stand silently before the Lord just as the lilies do, for at times there is no form of worship that seems possible to our joyous spirit except standing still and letting the love of the heart silently breathe itself out before the Lord like the fragrance of flowers ascending in a gentle breeze. In such a frame of mind as that, your spirit may well bear witness that you are a child of God!   
Then comes the Holy Spirit, the Infallible Witness, and through the Word and through His own mysterious influence upon our heart, He bears witness that we are the children of God. Two witnesses were required, under the Law of God, to establish a charge that was made against any man. And under the Gospel, we have two witnesses to establish our claim to be the children of Godfirst, the witness of our own spiritand then the second and far greater Witness, the Holy Spirit, Himself! And by the mouth of these two witnesses shall our claim be fully established. If our own spirit were our only witness, we might hesitate to receive its testimony, for it is fallible and partial. But when the Infallible and impartial Spirit of God confirms the unfaltering witness of our own heart and conscience, then may we have confidence toward God and believe without hesitation that we are, indeed, the children of the Most High God! One of the points on which the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God is thisWe know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. When we really love those who are Gods children, it is strong presumptive evidence that we are, ourselves, members of His family! And when we truly love God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spiritwhen we have a compassionate love to the souls of men and an intense love of holiness and hatred of sin, and desire for Gods Gloryall these are the further witness to the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God.  
Then, as there are two witnesses that we are the children of God, so are there two ways in which we become the children of God.   
First, we are the children of God by adoption. When God asked Himself the question, How shall I put the children of wrath among My children? He answered Himself by saying, I will do it by adopting them into My family. We were far off from God by wicked works, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Yet, by the Grace of God, we have been adopted into the Divine family!   
Now you know that a child may be adopted into a noblemans family, and yet he will not really be one of the noblemans kindred. So there is a second way in which we become the children of God, that is, by regeneration. We are born into the family of God as well as adopted into it, and thus we become partakers of the Divine Nature. So Peter writes, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Adoption gives us the privileges of the children of God. Regeneration gives us the Nature of the children of God! Adoption admits us into the Divine family. Regeneration makes us akin to the Divine Fatherit creates us anew in Christ Jesus and puts into us a spark from the eternal Spirit, Himself, so that we become spiritual beings. Before regeneration, we are only body and soulbut when we are born-again, born from abovewe become body, soul and spirit. Being born of the Spirit, we understand spiritual things and have spiritual perceptions which we never possessed before.   
Becoming the children of God, we are entitled to all the privileges of childhood. It is the privilege of a child to enjoy its fathers love, its fathers care, its fathers teaching, its fathers protection, its fathers provision and last, but by no means least, its fathers chastening. Whatever a child receives as its right from its father, we also receive from our Father who is in Heaven. If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give to you who are His children every blessing that you can possibly need while you are here on earth, and Heaven itself to crown it all?

Then the Apostle further says, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Now, in this country, it is not always true that, if children, then heirs, because we have laws, (of which some may approve, though I fail to see the justice of them), which make one son to be the heir just because he happens to be the first-born. It is not so in Gods family! It is, if children, then heirs, that is to say, all the children in the Divine family are Gods heirs! The last one who ever will be born into the family of God will be as much an heir as the first who said, My Father, who are in Heaven. And the least of the children of GodLittle-Faith, Ready-to-Halt and Miss Much-Afraid, are just as much the heirs of God as Faithful, Valiant-for-Truth and Mr. Great-Heart, himself! If children, that is all, if children, then heirs. Are they true-born children of God? Have they the faith which is the characteristic mark of all who are in Gods family? Are they truly converted? Have they been born-again, born into the family of God? If so, then it follows of necessity that, if children, then heirs. Does not this Truth of God encourage poor Miss Despondency over there, and you, Mr. Fearing, and friend LittleFaith over yonder? If children, then heirs. Not, if big children, nor, if first-born children, nor, if strong children, but simply, if children, then heirs! If you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, Abba, Father, you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ!   
There is another remarkable thing in the family of God. If we, who were by nature the children of wrath, become by Grace, the children of God, we thereby become, all of us, the heirs of all that God has! Now, this can never happen in an earthly family. If the father were rich and all his children were his heirs, one son would have one farm and another son would have another farm. And each of the girls would have so many thousands of pounds for her dowry, but each one of them could not have all that there wasit would have to be divided between themone would have what the others had not, and could not have anything that they had. But, in Gods family, all the children are heirs of all that is His. My dear Brother or Sister in Christ, if you have a choice privilege that is yours because you are a Christian, I rejoice that you have it, but I have it, too! And if I have a precious promise that belongs to me because I am one of the Lords children, you may be thankful for it, for it belongs equally to you! No child of God can keep Christ all to himself, for He is the portion of all His people! Some dear brethren whom I know would like to plant a very prickly hedge around their little gardens, so as to keep all their Christian privileges to themselvesbut Gods birds of paradise can fly over those hedges and share in all the good things they are intended to enclose!   
If children, then heirs, heirs of God. You, my dear Brother or Sister, have Christ, and I have Christ! You have the Spirit, and I have the Spirit. You have the Father, and I have the Father. You have pardon, you have peace, you have the righteousness of Christ, you have union with Christ, you have security in life, you have safety in death, you have the assurance of a blessed resurrection and of eternal glory, but so have all those who have believed in Jesus! There is the same inheritance for all the children of Godnot a part for one, and another part for another. The Covenant is not, Manasseh shall have this portion of the promised land, and Issachar that portion, and Zebulun that other portion. But to every Believer the Lord says, Lift up now your eyes to the North, and to the South, to the East, and to the West, for all this goodly heritage have I given to you by a Covenant of salt forever.   
There is another thing about this inheritance that makes it still more precious to us, and that is that everyone of the heirs shall certainly inherit itand that is more than you can say about any earthly inheritance. If you know that somebody has made a will in your favor, do not reckon that the estate or money is really yours until you are actually in possession of it, for there is many a slip twixt the cup and the lip. The will may be revoked and the new one may leave you out, or there may be a flaw in it so that the estate will get into Chancery, and remain there for the term of your natural life. Even if there is no doubt that you are the heir, there may be many who will dispute your right to the inheritance. But if you are really a child of God, not even the devil, himself, shall be able to rob you of your heavenly inheritance! Satan may deny that you are an heir of God, but your heavenly Father will say, Yes, he is, indeed, My child, and heir to all I have. I remember his first tear of penitence and I have preserved that in my bottle. I remember his first true prayer, his first look of faith, his first note of praisethey are all registered in My records that none can erase. I have his name here in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and it can never be blotted out! Yes, he is My child and My heirall that I have belongs to him. There is a day coming when all Christs sheep shall pass again under the hand of Him that counts themand in that day, not one of the whole redeemed flock shall be missing! As the long roll of Gods ransomed family is called, it shall be asked, Is Little-Faith here? And he will answer to his name not at all in the trembling way in which he used to speak when he was upon earth. When it is asked, Is Miss MuchAfraid here? she will reply, in jubilant tones, Glory be to God, I am here! No matter how weak and feeble you may be, if you are a child of God, you shall certainly be there and the inheritance shall assuredly be yours!   
I have not yet done with this expression, heirs of God. Paul does not say that the children of God are heirs of Heaven. Our inheritance is much bigger than that, for Heaven has its bounds, but God has none. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God never will! We are heirs, therefore, of unending bliss, for we are heirs of God. There is no one here, there is no one on earth, there is no man or angel in Heaven who can tell the full meaning of this expression, heirs of God. The words are simple enough for even a child to utter, but only God fully understands what they mean. And we shall go on learning throughout eternity all that is included in those three short words. To have God Himself as our inheritance, to be able to say, The Lord is my portion, is a thousand heavens in one! And all the children of God are the heirs of Godno one of them will ever have to say, My portion will have to be stinted because my elder brother has taken such a large sharebut everyone shall have God to enjoy here on earth, and then to enjoy forever in Heaven!  
Finally the Apostle says, and joint heirs with Christ. It always adds to our enjoyment of any pleasure if we have someone whom we greatly love to share it with us. Then how much more shall we enjoy our heavenly inheritance because we are to occupy it with Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, to whose Incarnation, life, death, Resurrection and intercession we are indebted for it all! Oh, who would not be a child of God, to have such bliss forever and to enjoy it in such blessed Company? Yet is there anyone here who despises his inheritance? Is there anyone here like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, and who, afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears? Is there someone here who was once a professor of religion, who has gone back to the world in the hope of getting a better living or a little praise among men? Poor Soul, pour Soul, how I pity you! But, O child of God, have you been kept faithful even to this hour? Then let Naboth rather than Esau be your model! Ahab offered Naboth a better vineyard than his own, or the worth of it in money if he would sell it, but he would neither exchange nor sell his inheritance even though his refusal to do so cost him his lifeand it would be better for us to die a thousand deaths than to think of parting with our heavenly inheritance! Happily, if we are really the children of God, He who has, by His Grace, made us His children, will keep us His children! And He will both keep us for the inheritance and keep the inheritance for us!   
There is, however, such a danger of being only children of God in name, and not in truth, that we shall all do well to give heed to the Apostles warning, Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Having put our hand to the plow, let us not even think of looking back, but may we be proved to be the living children of the living God by walking in His ways until we come into His blessed Presence to go no more out forever for His dear Sons sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EPHESIANS 2.**  
Verse 1. And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses

and sins. [See Sermons #127, Volume 3SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION; #2267, Volume 38LIFE FROM THE DEAD and #2388, Volume 40ONCE DEAD, NOW ALIVERead/download all these sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Then you owe your very life to

Him! You were dead, you were like a corrupt carcass, but His life has been breathed into you. You has He quickened. Then you are no longer deadyou are a living soul before the living Godand as you owe this to Him, praise Him with all the life you have! You were dead in trespasses and sins.

2, 3. Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: among whom we, also, all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. It does us good to remember what we used to be. There was no reason in us, by nature, why we should be made the children of God. There were in us no distinguishing traits of character by which we were separated from our fellow sinners. We ran in the same course. We were possessed by the same spirit. We worked the same works. We had the same nature. We were under the same condemnationchildren of wrath, even as others.

4, 5. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace you are saved). [See Sermons #2968, Volume 52HIS GREAT

LOVE; #805, Volume 14RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST and #2741, Volume 47SALVATION BY GRACERead/download all these sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] By

Grace you are saved. I know that you feel that it is so. Our quickening out of our death in sin must have been by Graceand as God has done itunto Him must be ascribed all the glory of it! There can be no merit in those who are dead in sin that they should be quickened out of their sin! This must be the work of the Lord, alone, and unto Him be all the praise. He has quickened us together with Christ, so that our life is mystically linked with the life of Christ, as He said to His disciples, Because I live, you shall also live. Until He can die, those who are one with Him cannot die.

6. And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It is all in Him and it has a sevenfold sweetness about it because it is in Him. To live unto God is a wondrous mercy, but to live together with Christ is an unspeakable honor! To be raised up into the heavenly places would be a surpassing blessing, but to be raised up there together with Christ, and to be made to sit there with Him, is a gift that is above the superlative! I know not how else to speak of it.

7, 8. That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by Grace

are you saved through faith. [See Sermons #1064, Volume 18SALVATION ALL OF GRACE and #1609, Volume 27FAITHWHAT IS IT? HOW CAN IT BE OBTAINED?Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] It must be all of Grace be

cause of the greatness of the favor bestowed. A man dead in trespasses and sins cannot deserve to be made alive. And when he is made alive, he cannot deserve to be raised up to sit with Christ in the heavenly places! That is too great a gift to come to us by the way of the Lawit must come to us emphatically as the gift of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus! For by Grace are you saved through faith

8. And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of yourselves. What do those people mean who keep on crying up the power of the human will, the wonderful dignity of human nature and all that kind of foolish talk? Salvation is not of ourselves! It is the gift of God, not a reward which we have earned, but a free gift which God bestows according to the riches of His Grace!

9. Not of works, lest any man should boast. God will not have a boaster in Heaven! He will not have the creature exalting himself in His Presence. The command, Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. is backed up by this reason, for I am God, and there is none else. Therefore unto God, Himself, must be the praise and glory for all who are saved.

10. For we are His workmanship. [See Sermons #1829, Volume 31THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A CHRISTIAN and #2210, Volume 37THE AGREEMENT OF SALVATION BY GRACE WITH WALKING IN GOOD WORKSRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Salvation cannot be of works, for if we have any good works, it is because we are Gods workmanship.

10-12. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Therefore remember that you being in time past, Gentiles in the fleshwho are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh by handsthat at that time you were without Christ. Certainly we were poor sinners of the Gentiles, having no participation whatever in the old Mosaic dispensation.

12. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. For us there was no paschal lamb, for us there was no high priest at Jerusalem, no altar smoked with a sacrifice for uswe were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel

12. And strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. That is where the whole Gentile world stood! And this is experimentally where you and I stood till Sovereign Grace interposed for our salvation. What knew we about the Covenants of promise? We knew nothing and we did not care to know anything! What did we know about a hope? We would have died without a hope if Gods mercy had not come to us! What knew we, or what cared we about a God in the world? We may have thought that there was a God in Heaven, but as actually operating upon the daily life of man, we knew no such God! We were without God in the world.

13. But now. Oh, what a blessed, but! How much hangs upon it! Think of what God has done for you by His Grace! But now   
13. In Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by

the blood of Christ. [See Sermon #851, Volume 15NEARNESS TO GODRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a power there must

be about that bloodthat God not only hears it speaking in Heaven, that it makes a way of access for all the saints, that it cleanses from all sin but that it brings the far-off ones near! We will never cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus! There are certain people who cannot bear to hear it mentioned, but a bloodless theology is a lifeless theology, and a ministry that can do without mentioning the blood of Christ has no power to bless the sons and daughters of men.

14. For He is our peace. We find in Christ, peace with God, peace with our own conscience, peace with all mankind!  
14. Who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. So making Jews and Gentiles one   
15. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in ordinances; so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, so making peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew, yet I venture to say that there was nothing Jewish about Him. He was the model of what man ought to have been and His words and His actions made Him worthy to be called cosmopolitan. He belongs to all mankind. He is the Man in whom all races are summed up! And when we come to Christ, there is a link between us and the ancient people of God. I do not care about Anglo-Israelism, what I care for is Christo-Israelism to belong to the Israel of God in Christ Jesus!   
16-17. And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near. Christ is the Preacher of peace as well as the Maker of peaceand no man ever knows the peace of God unless Christ preaches it to him.   
18, 19. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now thereforeHere is another sweet now.   
19. You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. A part of the family of the great Householder, even God! Citizenship is well enough in its place, but citizens do not always know one another. But we are of the household of Godwe are brought into an intimate relationship with one another through our Elder Brother who makes us to be the children of the great Father in Heaven!   
20, 21. And are built upon the foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself, being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. We are put so close together, if we are really in Christ, that we are like the stones of the templeso united as to become one. In Christ Jesus our union is not only that of relationship, but we enter into a perfect unity with one another and with the Lord.   
22. In whom you also are being built together for an habitation of God

through the Spirit. [See Sermon #267, Volume 56THE TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That is the

most wonderful Truth of allthat God Himself should come and dwell among His people and in His people, and that, being sanctified by Grace, we become the dwelling place of the Most High! God grant that it may be so! Amen.

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HIS GREAT LOVE   
NO. 2968

A SERMON   
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His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins. Ephesians 2:4, 5.

You notice, in this chapter, the remarkable change of subject which commences at the 4th verse. Paul had been giving a very sad description of what even the saints are by nature and of their conduct before conversion. And then, as if he was quite weary of writing upon that painful topic, he says, But Godand goes on to tell what God has done. What a relief it is to turn from ourselves and from our fellow men, to God! And I do not know when God, in His rich mercy, ever seems so lovely in our eyes as when we have just gazed upon our own abundant sins. The diamond shines all the more brilliantly when it has a suitable foil to set off its brightnessand man seems to act as a foil for the goodness and the mercy of God! Perhaps you remember that the Psalmist, when he had said in his haste, All men are liars, turned abruptly from that theme and said, What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? It is as if he had said, I will not have anything more to do with man. I find him to be only like a broken cistern that can hold no waterbut as for my God, He has never failed me and He never willso, I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

I want, at this time, to intertwine these two subjectsourselves in our fall and God in His Graceourselves in our sin and God in His loveHis great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins. I shall not need so much to preach as just to refresh your memoriesto revive your recollections of the great tidings which the Lord, in His Grace, has done for you. I want you who know the Lord to remember what you wereand what God has done for you. Those two themes will bring out the greatness of His love, so they shall be our two objects for meditation. First,

what we were. And secondly, what God did for us.

I. First, then, WHAT WE WERE. The text says that we were dead in sins.   
O Believer, whatever life of a spiritual kind you have in you, today, was given to you by God! It was not yours by nature. Before God looked upon you in love and pity and said unto you, Live, you were dead! That is to say, as far as spiritual things are concerned, you were insensible insensible alike to the bearers of Divine Wrath and to the melodies of Divine Love. You could even lie at the foot of Sinai and not shake with fright, although Moses did exceedingly fear and quake. And you could lie at the foot of the Cross and yet not be melted by the death-cries of Immanuel, although the earth did quake and the rocks were rent and the graves were opened at that doleful sound! Do you not remember, Beloved, when you passed through such a time as that? I dowhen utter callousness and coldness of heart reigned supreme within us, when the worldpainted harlot as she iscould attract us, but we were insensible to the inexpressible beauties of Him who is altogether lovely, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!   
And as we were insensible to spiritual things, being dead, so we were, at that time, without power to do anything. We were preached to, called and bid to come, but, as far as all goodness was concerned, we were like a corpseunable to hear the sweetest music, or the crack of doom resounding overhead! Do you not remember, dear Friends, when it was so with you? You thought then that you could do something good in your own strength, but it was a dreadful failure when you attempted it! Your resolutions, when you got as far as resolving, all fell to the ground, for you were, in the emphatic words of Paul, without strength. Yes, you were insensible and powerless.   
And, what is worse still, we were then without will or desire to come to God. We had no disposition to move towards the Lord, no aspirations after holiness, no longing after communion with our Creator. We loved the world and were content to fill our treasury with its paltry pelf. This seemed to be the only portion for which we cared. If we could have become rich and increased with goods, we would have said, Soul, take your easethere is nothing more for you to desire.   
That was our state by nature. We were dead. And did the Lord love us then, when there was nothing whatever in us to commend us to Him nothing by which we could possibly rise into a condition that would be estimable in His sight? Did He love us then? Yes, He didand there must have been surprising Grace in that great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.   
While we were dead as to spiritual things, there was, alas, a life in us of another kind. If you read the chapter from which our text is taken, you will find that the dead people are described as walking. They were walking corpsesa strange commingling of metaphors, and yet most certainly true with regard to all ungodly men. They are dead to goodness, but, as for the evil within them, how full of life it is! The devil within them and the flesh within them were active and, as the corpse gives forth corruption and fills the tomb with putridity, so did our sin continually give forth evil emanations which must have been most nauseous to God! Yet, notwithstanding all this, He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.   
Let me just mention some of the unlovely and unlovable things which God saw in us while we were in that dead state. One of the first was thiswe were ungrateful. It is very difficult to continue to love ungrateful persons. If you seek to do them good and yet you receive no thanks from themif you persevere in doing them good and yet, for all that, they are unkind to youit is not in flesh and blood to continue to love them. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what ingratitude to God was once in our hearts! What favors the Lord bestowed upon usnot merely daily bread and temporal blessings, but there were real spiritual gifts of His Grace presented to usyet we turned our backs upon them all and, still worse, we turned our backs upon Him who gave them to us! How sad it is that many people live year after year without ever recognizing the God who gives them so many mercies and blessings! Perhaps, now and then, there is a thank God uttered in idleness or as a complimentbut there is no heart in it. The ingratitude of some of us was greater even than that of others, for we were born of godly parents, we were nurtured in the home of piety, we heard scarcely a sound in our infancy that was not mingled with the name of Jesus and yet, as we grew up, these very things we regarded as restraints! And sometimes we wished that we could do as other peoples children did and half regretted that we had godly friends who watched so carefully over our conduct. The Lord might have said to us, I have done so much for you, yet you exhibit no gratitude. I will, therefore, leave you and give these favors to others. But, in His great mercy, although we were so ungrateful, He did not act like that.   
What is even worse, we were complaining and murmuring. Do you not remember, in your unconverted state, my Friend, how scarcely anything seemed to please you? This thing happened quite contrary to your wishes and that was not at all to your likingand the other was not according to your notion of what should be. The Prophet Jeremiah asked, Why does a living man complain? But we seemed to ask, Why should we leave off complaining? We murmured against the Lord notwithstanding the great mercies that He gave us. We rebelled against Him and waxed worse and worse. It is a difficult thing for us to love a murmurer. When you try to do a man good and he only grumbles at what you do for him, you are very apt to say, Very well, I will take my favors where they will be better appreciated. But God did not act like that towards usHis great love with which He loved us was not to be turned away from us even by our murmuring and complaining!   
And all that while, dear Friends, we were trifling with spiritual things. Like those people mentioned in the parable who, when they were invited to the marriage feast, made light of it, so did we. We were warned to escape from Hell, but it seemed too like an idle tale! We were bid to seek after Heaven, but we loved the things of this world too well to barter them for joys unseen and eternal. We were told that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and it seemed to be a story that we had heard so often that we called it a platitude. We were earnestly entreated to lay hold on Christ and to find eternal life in Him, but we said, Perhaps we will tomorrow, proving that we did not care about it, but would make God wait at our beck and call when it should be convenient for us! You know that if a man is in an ill state of health and you, as a doctor, go to help him, but he merely laughs at his illness and says that he does not care about it, you are very apt to say, Then, why should I care? You are sick and I am anxious to heal you, but you say that you do not care to be healed. Very well, then, I will go to some other patient who will entreat me to use my best skills on his behalf and who will be grateful to me when I have used them. But the Lord did not act like that with us. Notwithstanding our trifling, He was in earnest. He meant to heal our soul-sickness and He did heal it! Determined to save us, He would not heed the rebuff of our carelessness and callousness, but still persevered in manifesting toward us that great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.   
To make the deformity of our character still worsewe were all the while proudas proud as Lucifer! We had not any righteousness of our own, yet we thought we had. We were far off from God by wicked works, yet we stood before Him like the Pharisee in the Temple and thanked Him that we were not as other men! We were quite content though we had nothing to be content with. We were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, yet we said that we were rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing. As for shedding penitential tears, we left that work to those who had sinned more deeply than we had, for we imagined that we had kept all the Commandments from our youth up! Thus we despised the Savior because we exalted ourselves. We thought little of Christ because we thought much of ourselves. And so, in our pride, we dared to strut before the eternal Throne of God as if we were some great ones, though we were but worms of the dust! I think that it is one of the most difficult things in the world to love a proud man. You can love a man even though he has a thousand faults if he is not proud and boastfulbut when he is very proud, human nature seems to start back from him. Yet God, in His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, loved us although we were proud and loved us out of that sinful state.   
If worse could be, there was something even worse than pride in us, for we were deceptive as well as proud. No, says one, surely you cannot truthfully lay that to our charge. Well, I have to confess that it was so with myself. I remember that when I was ill, I said that if God would only spare my life, I would live differently in the future. But my promise was not kept, though God did spare my life. Often, after hearing a stirring sermon, I sought a place where I could weep in secret and I said, Now I will be decided for the Lord. But it was not so. Oh, how many times have we broken the promises and vows we made to the Lord! Child of God, before your conversion, how many vows and covenants you madeyet your goodness was like the morning cloud or the early dew which soon passes away. Who can love one who is not to be trusted? Yet, God, in His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, loved us while we so many times deceived Him!   
These things which I have mentioned have appertained to all the children of God, but there are some of them whose sins have been even greater than these. I ask every converted man here to look through his own biography. Some of you were, perhaps, converted while you were young and so were kept from the grosser sins into which others fall. But there were some who were allowed to go into drunkenness, or into uncleanness and all manner of iniquity. God has forgiven you, my Brothers and Sisters, and has washed all that evil away in the precious blood of Jesus, but you feel that you can never forgive yourself. I know that I am bringing some very unhappy memories before you, of which you say, Would God that night had never been, or that day had never passed over my head! The Lord grant that as you look back upon those sins of yours, you may feel deeply humbled and, at the same time, may be devoutly grateful to God for His great love with which He has loved you!

There have been some who seem as if they had gone to the utmost extremity of sinas if they dared and defied the Most High. And yet, notwithstanding their atrocious sins, Free Grace has won the day! There has seemed, in some cases, to be a stern struggle between sin and Grace, as if sin said, I will provoke God till Grace shall leave Him, but Grace has said, Provoked as the Lord is, yet still will He stand to His purpose of mercyHe will not turn away from the decree of His love. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I ask you to think this subject over in your own private meditations. There are some things that it would not be right to mention in any ear but the ear of God, for it certainly was a horrible pit out of which He took us, and miry clay, indeed, out of which He drew usso we may well praise His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins.   
II. The second subject for our meditation is WHAT GOD DID FOR US even when we were dead in sins.   
Well, first of all, He remained faithful to His choice of us. He had chosen His people before the earth was and He did not choose them in the dark. He knew right well what their nature would be and also the practice which would grow out of their natureso that nothing that has happened has ever surprised the Lord concerning any one of His people. He was well aware beforehand of all their corruption and filthiness. So, when He saw them acting as I have described, He did not turn from His purpose to save them. Blessed be His name for this! It is one of the wonders of His Grace that God proves the greatness of His love.   
Then, next, as He did not repent of His choice, so neither did He repent of His redemption of His people. You will find it recorded in Scripture that it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart, but you never read that He repented of Redemption! Nowhere in Scripture is there such a passage as this, It grieved the Lord at His heart that He had given His Son to die for such unworthy ones. No, my Friends, He had bought us with a price beyond all calculation, even the hearts blood of His only-begotten Son, so that, although we went from sin to sin and, for a time resisted all the calls of the Gospel, He did not turn from His purpose of love and mercy, nor make His Atonement for us null and void.   
Then, further, in His great love for us, God would not let us die till He had brought us to Christ. We possibly passed through many perils and had many escapes. John Bunyan, you will remember, was to have stood as sentinel one night, but another soldier took his place, and was shot. John Bunyan did not know, at the time, why the exchange was made, but God had ordained that he should not die till he had been brought to Christ. So fool-hardy was he that on one occasion he plucked the sting out of a viper with his bare hand, yet he was unhurt, for God would not let him die while he was such a desperado! And what amazing escapes from shipwreck, from murder, from fever, from accidents in a thousand forms some men have had simply because God will not let them perish, for He means that they shall yet be brought as sheep into His fold! I told you, some time ago, that I once talked with a gentleman who was in the famous charge at Balaclavaand I felt moved to say to him, Surely God had some designs of love toward you, or He would not have spared you when so many were being taken away. Well, in whatever way our lives have been spared, we ascribe it to the great love with which God loved us even when we were dead in sins.   
We see that great love also manifested in the way in which God restrained us from many sins. There have been times in our history when, if it had not been for a mysterious check that was put upon us, we would have sinned much worse than we ever did. Something of that kind happened in the case of the well-known Colonel Gardiner. He had made an appointment for the commission of a very gross sin, but the Lord had chosen him unto eternal lifeso that night, which he intended to spend in sinbecame the time of his conversion to God! And you know what a devout and earnest Christian he became. The Lord knows the right time to say to anyone, Thus far shall you go, but no farther. He makes mens minds and hearts, like the sea, to know His will and to move or be still at His Divine command. Cannot some of you, my Brothers and Sisters, recollect the way in which God thus restrained you from going to an excess of riot?   
And, then, His great love was seen by the way in which He kept on calling us by His Grace. Some of us can scarcely tell when we were first bid to come to the Savior. A mothers tears and a fathers prayers are, however, among the fondly-cherished memories of that early call. Do not some of you remember that loving Sunday school teacher and the earnestness with which she pleaded with you? And that godly minister and how he seemed to throw his whole soul into the work of entreating you to yield yourself to the Savior? Others of you cannot forget how with good books, letters, entreaties and persuasions from Christian friends, you have been followed as if the Lord had hunted you out of your sins by all the agencies that could possibly be usedyet you dodged, twisted and doubled this way and that way, trying to escape from your gracious Pursuer! You were like a bird that the fowler cannot take for a long while, or like a wandering sheep that the shepherd cannot find for many a day!   
But the Good Shepherd never gave up the searchHe meant to find you and He did. He had determined to save youand from that determination He would not be turned aside, do whatever you might! And, at last, there came the blessed day when He subdued you unto Himself! The weapons of your rebellion fell from your hands, for Christ had conquered you! And how did He do it? By His great loveHis Omnipotent Grace. You were dead in sins when His Spirit came to work them upon you, but the Spirit came, in the name of the risen Savior, with such almighty force of Irresistible Love that you were carried captivea willing captiveat the chariot wheels of your Divine Conqueror! Shall we ever forget that blessed time? We sing Happy day! Happy day! and well we may, for that conquest is the chief and foremost token of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.   
I will not say more about this precious Truth of God, but I will use the few minutes still at my disposal in making a practical application of my subject.   
If, dear Friends, the Lord loved us with such great love even when we were dead in sins, do you think that He will ever leave us to perish? Have you indulged the notion that under your present trial, whatever it may be, you will be deserted by your God? My dear widowed Sister, do you fear that the Lord will forsake you now that your husband is dead? My friend over thereyou who have had heavy losses in businessdo you not believe that the Lord will help you through? Did He love you when you were dead in sins and is He going to desert you now? Do you think you will ever have to ask, with the Psalmist, Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? If you do talk like that, then ask yourself why the Lord ever began His work of love upon you if He did not mean to finish it, or if He meant, after all, to cast you off? Do you think, if that was His intention, He would ever have begun with you? He knew all that would happen to you and all that you would do, so that nothing comes unexpectedly to Him! Known unto the Lord from the beginning, were all your trials and all your sins so that, as He still loved you, in the foresight of all that was to happen to you, do you think that He will now, or ever, cast you away from Him? You know that He will not!   
Again, if He so loved you even when you were dead in sins, will He deny you anything that is for His own Glory and for your own and others good? You have been praying, but you have feared that the mercy you asked would never come. Think for a momentHe that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for you centuries before you were born will He not freely give to you all that you ought to ask of Him now that you are alive unto Him? George Herbert speaks of the dew that falls upon the grass, although the grass cannot call for the dewbut you do call upon God to give you His Graceso shall not His Grace come copiously to you as the dew falling when God sends it? Does He water the earth when its dumb mouth opens? Does He provide food for the dumb driven cattle? Then will He not attend to your cries and prayers when you call upon Him in the name of His well-beloved Son? If He loved you when you were a man of corruption, will He not answer your supplications, now that He has made you to be an heir of Heaven and formed you in the likeness of His Son? O, Beloved, be of good comfort and let no thought of despondency, or of unbelief ever cross your mind!   
Further, if the Lord loved you thus even when you were dead in sins, ought you not now love Him very much? Oh, the love of God! The Apostle does not say that God pitied us, though that is true. He does not say that the Lord had compassion upon us, though that is also true. But Paul speaks of His great love. I can perfectly understand Gods pitying me. I can perfectly understand Gods having compassion on me. But I cannot comprehend Gods loving menor can you. Think what it meansHe loves you! Sweet above all other things is lovea mothers love, a fathers love, a husbands love, a wifes lovebut all these are only faint images of the love of God! You know how greatly you are cheered by the earthly love of one who is dear to youbut Paul says that God loves you! He that made the heavens and the earth, before whom you are as an ant, has set His hearts affection upon you! He loves you so much that He has made great sacrifices for you. He is daily blessing you and He will not be in Heaven without you! So dear, so strong is His love to youand it was so even when you were dead in sins! Oh, then, will you not love Him much in return for His great love to you? Is anything too hard for you to bear for His dear sake, or anything too difficult for you to do for Him who loved you so? Dear Lord, we give

ourselves to Youtis all that we can do!   
Another reflection for you, my Christian Friend, is this. If God so loved you even when you were dead in sins, ought not you to love those who treat you badly? There are many people in this world who seem as if they could not do anything but ugly things. They have not a generous spot in their nature. They are cross-grained, always quarrelling and he who would gladly live peaceably with them sometimes finds it very hard work. I know some gentle spirits that are deeply wounded by the hard and cruel things that are said or done to them by their relatives or companions. Well, dear Friends, if any of us are treated thus, let us love these cruel people! Let us cover their unkindness over with our love, for, if God loved us even when we were dead in sinswhen He could not see anything in us to lovewe also ought to love others for His sake! Even when we see a thousand faults in them, we must, say, As God, for Christs sake, has forgiven us, so do we forgive you. It is a grand thing to be able to bury in eternal forgetfulness every unkind word or act that has ever caused us pain. If any of you have any thought of anger in your heart against anyoneif you have any feeling of resentmentif you have any recollection of injuries. If there is anything that vexes and grieves you, come and bury it all in the grave of Jesusfor if He loved you when you were dead in sinsit cannot be half so wonderful for you to love your poor fellow sinner whatever ill treatment you may have received at his hands!   
My last word is to the unconverted and it is a very sweet and precious word. Do you see, unconverted man, that you need never say, I dare not come to God through Jesus Christ because then is nothing good in me? You need never say that, for Paul speaks of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins. Now, if all His people were loved by Him when they were dead in sins, how can you think that God requires anything good in man as the cause or reason for His love? Of all the saints in Heaven it may be said that God loved them because He would do it, for, by nature, there was nothing more in them for God to love than there was in the very devils in Hell! And as to His saints on earth, if God loves themand He doesit is simply because He will do it, for there was no goodness whatever in them by nature! God loves them in the Infinite Sovereignty of His great loving Nature. Well, then, poor Soul, why should not God love you? And since He bids you come to Him, however empty you may be of everything that is good, come to Him, and welcome! Let the text knock on the head, once and for all, all ideas of doing anything to win the love of God! And if you feel yourself to be the very worst, lowest and meanest of the human race, I rejoice that you feel that, for the Lord loves to look upon those who are self-emptied and who have nothing good of their own to plead before Him! These are the people who will value His love and upon such people as these it is that He bestows His love. The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. The hospital is for the man who is diseased, not for the one who is in health. And the Lord Jesus Christ has opened a Hospital for incurablesfor those who cannot be cured by all the medicines of human morality and outward religion! Christ bids them come to Him that He may make them whole!   
I wish I had the power to speak of the love of God to the sinner in such a way that he would come to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I will try to put the brush very plainly and simplyand then I will close my discourse. My Hearer, whatever you may have been up to, to this momentif you have been a despiser of God, an infidel, a blasphemerif you have added sin to sin, if you have made yourself black as Hell with enormous transgressionsyet all this is no reason why God should not have chosen you and loved you! And all this is no reason why He should not now forgive you and accept you! No, He puts it thus in His WordCome now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.   
Come then, you blackest of sinnersyou who feel yourselves unfit to be found in a House of Prayeryou who, like the publican in the Temple, scarcely dare to lift up your eyes to Heavenyou condemned ones who fear that there is no hope for youlet me assure you that in you there is space for Gods mercy to be displayed! There is elbowroom for His Grace to work! Come to Jesus just as you are! Accept the Atonement made by His own blood and be saved here and now, for He waits to be gracious and He has said, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.   
I recollect the time, many years ago, when I would have given both my eyes to hear such Truth as I have preached tonight! It would not have mattered to me who had told it to me. If it had been a man of stammering tongue and faulty grammar, if he had but said to me, Salvation is of Gods Grace, not of your merit. It is of Gods goodness, not of your holinessyou have nothing to do but to rest on what Christ has done, for God loves even you who are dead in sinsif I had known that, I think I would have found peace with God long before I did. Does anyone say, But I need to feel and I need to do, and I need to find out this, and that, and the other? You need nothing of the kind, Sinner! Christ has done it all! To take any merit of your own to Christ would be worse than carrying coals to Newcastle! Come just as you arean empty-handed sinner, a bankrupt sinner, a starving sinner, you who are at the very gates of Hell, for   
*There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee!   
Then look, Sinnerlook unto Him and be saved Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 30.**

May the Holy Spirit who inspired the writer of this Psalm now lead us into its inner meaning! It is entitled, A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David. Or, rather, A Psalm; a song of dedication for the House. By David. It was a song of faith, since David did not live to witness the dedication of the Temple for which he had planned in his heart and for which he had laid by in store. Though he knew that he would not be permitted by God to build it, he took delight in writing a Psalm which might be sung at the opening of the Temple. Thus it begins

Verse 1 . I will extol You, O LORD; for You have lifted me up, and have not made my foe to rejoice over me. I will exalt You, for You have exalted me! I will lift up Your praise because You have lifted up my spirits. I will bless You, for You have blessed me. Our song of praise should be the echo of Gods voice of love. You have not made my foes to rejoice over me. You remember that this was one of the three things put to David as a chastisement for his great sin in numbering the peopleWill You flee three months before your enemies while they pursue you? He here praises the Lord that such calamity as that did not come upon him. You have not made my foes to rejoice over me. Sorrows averted should be the occasion of grateful songs of thanksgiving!

2. O LORD my God, I cried unto You, and You have healed me. The king and the people had been sorely smitten with sickness on account of his sin, but the Lord, in mercy, bade the destroying angel sheathe his sword when he was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusitethe very place which afterwards became the site on which the Temple was built! It was well, therefore, at its opening, to praise the God who heals His people. We ought to praise the Lord more than we do for our recovery from sickness. Employ the physician if you will, but, when healing comes to you, magnify the Lord for it and ascribe the glory of it to His holy name!

3. O LORD, You have brought up my soul from the grave: You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the Pit. Here is a double mercy to sing ofnot dead and not damned! Life spared is something for which to praise the Lord, but to have the soul saved from going down to the Pit is a cause of still greater thanksgiving! Oh praise the name of the Lord, you who love Him and trust in Him, for He has delivered you from going down into the Pit!

4. Sing unto the LORD, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. David seems to say to the saints, Do not let me sing alone, but all of you join in the chorus. He does not invite reprobates to praise the Lord, but He says, Sing unto Jehovah. O you saints of His. I think it is very wrong to have the praises of God sung in public by ungodly men and women, as they sometimes are. The singing should not be left to a godless choir. Oh, nosing unto the Lord, all you saints of His, for you, only, can sing sincerely unto Him.

Give thanks at the remembrance of His holinessat the very memory of Himat the remembrance of the whole of Him, for that is His holiness, His wholeness, the entire, perfect Character of God. O saints below, sing as they do in Heaven, for their song is Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.

5. For His anger endures but a moment. Notice that the words, endures but, are inserted by the translators and very properly so. But see how the passages reads if you leave them outFor His anger a moment. That is long enough for Him to display it, for it is His strange workand long enough for us to endure itfor it might crush us if it lasted longer!

5. In His favor is life. Life came to Jerusalem, in Davids day, as soon as God smiled upon it. And life comes to us as soon as we taste of His favor, even though we have been ready to die of despair.

5. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. As the dews are appropriate to the night, so is weeping seemly for us when Jesus hides His face from us. The children of the bride-chamber may well mourn when the heavenly Bridegroom is taken from them, but it is only for a night. Morning will end our mourning. Our night-sorrow is for the night, but our joys are for a day that will know no evening!

6. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. It is a pity to say too much. Very few people fall into the opposite fault of saying too little. It is always a pity to be counting with certainty upon the future and presuming, because of the hopefulness of the present, that this state of things will last forever. David was not wise when he said, in his prosperity, I shall never be moved.

7. LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong: You did hide Your face, and I was troubled. When God is at cross purposes with His people, they are troubled at once. There is no need for blows, no need for angry wordsYou did hide Your face, and I was troubled. That is enough for a child of Godlet him but miss the light of Gods Countenance and it breaks him down at once.

8. I cried to You, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What should the child of God do when he is in trouble, but cry? And to whom should he cry but to his Father?

9. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the Pit? Shall the dust praise You? Shall it declare Your truth? So his prayer was an argumentand that is the very bone and sinew of prayerto reason and argue with God. He seems to put it thusLord, if I lose my soul, You will be a loser, too, for You will lose a singer out of Your choir, one who would be glad enough to praise You and whose very life it is to magnify You. Oh, do not cut me down! When I am dead, when I am lost, there can be no praise to You from me, so spare me, my gracious God!

10. Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be You my helper. What a handy prayer this is, a prayer to carry about with you wherever you go! Lord, be You my Helper. That is a ministers prayer when he is going to preach. That is a Sunday school teachers prayer when going to the class. Is not that a prayer for the sufferer when the pain upon him is very severe? Lord, be You my Helper. Are you working for Him? Are you cast down in soul? This prayer will suit youLord, be You my Helper.

11. You have turned for me my mourning into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. What a transformation scene in answer to prayer! Notice that David does not say, I hope that you have, but he puts it thus, You haveYou have. He is quite sure about it and, being sure of this great mercy, he gives God all the glory of it. What a wonderful change it is! Not merely from mourning into peace, but into delightdelight expressed by dancing! Not merely from sackcloth into ordinary dress, but from the sackcloth of sorrow to the satin of gladness! God does nothing by halves. He not only chases away the night and gives us twilight, but He goes on to gladden us with the full glory of noontideand all this He does with a definite end and purpose!

12. To the end that my glory. Or, my tongue   
12. May sing praise to You, and not be silent. God ought to have praise from us. It is the quit-rent which we pay as tenants to the great Lord of Alllet us not rob Him of His revenue.   
12. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto You forever.

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RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST   
NO. 805

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ,   
(by Grace you are saved).   
Ephesians 2:4, 5.

THERE have been conferences of late of all sorts of people upon all kinds of subjects, but what a remarkable thing a conference would be if it were possible for persons who have been raised from the dead! If you could somehow or other get together the daughter of the Shunammite, the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow at the gates of Nain, Lazarus, and Eutychus, what strange communing they might have one with another! What singular enquiries they might make, and what remarkable disclosures might they present to us! The thing is not possible, and yet a better and more remarkable assembly may be readily gathered on the same conditions, and more important information may be obtained from the confessions of its members.

This morning we have a conference of that very character gathered in this house, for many of us were dead in trespasses and sins, even as othersbut we hope that through Divine energy we have been quickened from that spiritual death, and are now living to praise God! It will be well for us to talk together, to review the past, to rejoice in the present, to look forward to the future. You has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. And as you sit together, an assembly of men and women possessed of resurrection life, you are a more notable conclave than if merely your bodies and not your spirits had been quickened!

The first part of this mornings discourse will be occupied with a solemnity in which we shall take you into the morgue. Secondly, we shall spend awhile in reviewing a miracle, and we shall observe dead men living. We shall then turn aside to observe a sympathy indicated in the text, and we shall close with a song, for the text reads somewhat like musicit is full of thankfulness, and thankfulness is the essence of true song. It is full of holy and adoring wonder! It is evermore true poetry even though expressed in prose.

I. Celebrate, first, a great SOLEMNITY and descend into the morgue of our poor humanity. According to the teaching of sacred Scripture, men are dead, spiritually dead. Certain vain men would make it out that men are only a little disordered and bruised by the Fallwounded in a few delicate members but not mortally injured. However, the Word of God is very explicit upon the matter and declares our race to be not wounded, not merely hurt, but slain outright and left as dead in trespasses and sin.

There are those who fancy that fallen human nature is only in a sort of swoon or fainting fitand only needs a process of reviving to set it right. You have only, by education and by other manipulations, to set its lifefloods in motion and to excite within it some degree of actionand then life will speedily be developed. There is much good in every man, they say, and you have only to bring it out by training and example. This fiction is exactly opposite to the teaching of sacred Scripture! Within these truthful pages we read of no fainting fit, no temporary paralysisDEATH is the name for natures conditionand quickening is its great necessity.

Man is not partly dead, like the half-drowned mariner in whom some spark of life may yet remain if it be but fondly tendered, and wisely nurtured. There is not a spark of spiritual life left in manmanhood is to all spiritual things an absolute corpse. In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die, said God to our first parents, and die they dida spiritual deathand all their children alike by nature lie in this spiritual death. It is not a sham death, or a metaphorical one, but a real, absolute, spiritual death. Yet it will be said, Are they not alive? Truly so, but not spiritually. There are grades of life. You come first upon the vegetable lifebut the vegetable is a dead thing as to the vitality of the animal. Above the animal life rises the mental life, a vastly superior life. The creature, which is only an animal, is dead to either the joys or the sorrows of mental life.

Then, high above the mental, as much as the mental is above the animal, rises what Scripture calls the spiritual lifethe life in Christ Jesus. All men have more or less of the mental life, and it is well that they should cultivate itget as much as they can of it. It is well that they should put it to the best uses, and make it subserve the highest ends. Man, even looked upon as merely living mentally, is not to be despised or trifled with. But still, the mental life cannot of itself rise to the spiritual lifeit cannot penetrate beyond that mystical wall which separates forever the mere life of mind from the life of that new principle, the Spirit, which is the offspring of God and is the living and incorruptible seed which He casts into the soul.

If you could conceive a man in all respects like yourselves with this one differencethat his soul had died out of himthat he only possessed his animal faculties and had no intellectual faculties, so that he could breathe and walk, sleep and eat, and drink, and make a noise, but all mental power was goneyou would then speak of him as being entirely dead to mental pursuits. He might be a most vigorous and well-developed animal, but his manhood would be dead. It would be of no use explaining a proposition to him, or working out a problem on the black board for his instruction, or offering him even the simplest school bookfor if he had no mind to receive, how could you impart? Now, spiritually, this is the condition of every unregenerate man. It is of no use whatever, apart from the Spirit of God, to hope to make the man understand spiritual things for they are spiritually discerned, says the Apostle.

The carnal mind cannot understand the things which are of God when best trained it has no glimmering of the inward sense of spiritual things. It stumbles over the letter and loses the real meaning, not from lack of mental capacity, but from the absence of spiritual life. O sons of men, if you would know God, You must be born again. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He cannot understand it, he cannot know it. The carnal man cannot understand the things which are of God, which are eternal and invisible, any more than an ox can understand astronomy, or a fish can admire the classics. Not in a moral sense, nor a mental sense, but in a spiritual sense, poor humanity is dead, and so the Word of God again and again most positively describes it.

Step with me, then, into the sepulcher, and what do you observe of yonder bodies which are slumbering there? They are quite unconscious. Whatever goes on around them, neither occasions them joy nor causes them grief. The dead in their graves may be marched over by triumphant armies, but they shout not with them that triumph. Or, friends they have left behind may sit there and water the grass upon the green mound with their tears, but no responsive sigh comes from the gloomy cavern of the tomb.

It is thus with men spiritually deadthey are unaffected by spiritual things. A dying Savior, whose groans might move the very stones and make the rocks dissolvethe spiritually dead can hear alland be unmoved. Even the all-present Spirit is undiscerned by them, and His power unrecognized. Angels, holy men, godly exercises, devout aspirationsall these are beyond and above their world. The pangs of Hell do not alarm them and the joys of Heaven do not entice them. They hear, after a sort, mentally, but the spirit-ear is fast shut up and they do not hear. They are unconscious of all things which are of a spiritual character they have eyes but they see not, and ears, but they hear not.

You can interest them in the facts of geology, or the discoveries of art, but you cannot win their hearts to spiritual emotions and pursuits because they are as unaware of their meaning as an oyster or snail is unacquainted with the dis-establishment of the Irish Church. Carnal men blunder over the first words of spiritual knowledge as Nicodemus did who, when he was told that he must be born again, began to enquire, How can a man be born again when he is old? or, like the woman of Samaria, who, when she was told of living water, could not understand the spiritual Truth, and exclaimed in wonder, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deepfrom where, then, have You that living water? Men are spiritually unconscious of spiritual Truth, and so far dead to it.

Observe that corpseyou may strike it, you may bruise it, but it will not cry out. You may pile burdens upon it, but it is not weary. You may shut it up in darkness, but it feels not the gloom. So the unconverted man is laden with the load of his sin but he is not weary of it. He is shut up in the prison of Gods justice, but he pants not for liberty. He is under the curse of God, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them, but that curse causes no commotion in his spirit because he is dead! Well may some of you be peaceful, because you are not aware of the terrors which surround you.

A man totally deaf is not startled by thunder! If totally blind, he is not alarmed by the flashes of lightning! He fears not the tempest which he does not discern! Even thus is it with you who are at ease in your sins you cannot discern the danger of your sin, you do not perceive the terror that rises out of itelse let me tell you there would be no sleep to those wanton eyes, no rest to those giddy spirits! You would cry out in grief the very moment you received life, nor would you rest till delivered from those evils which NOW ensure for you a sure damnation. Oh, were you but alive, you would never be quiet till you were saved from the wrath to come! Man remains unconscious of spiritual things and unmoved by them because, in a spiritual sense, he is dead.

Invite yonder corpse to assist you in the most necessary works of philanthropy. The pestilence is abroadask the buried one to kneel with you and invoke the power of Heaven to recall the direful messenger. Or, if he prefers it, ask him to assist you in purifying the air and attending to sanitary arrangements. You ask in vain, however necessary or simple the act, he cannot help you in it. And in spiritual things, it is even so with the graceless. The carnal man can put himself into the posture of prayer, but he cannot pray. He can open his mouth and make sweet sounds in earthborn music, but to true praise he is an utter stranger. Even repentance, that soft and gentle Grace which ought to be natural to the sinful is quite beyond his reach. How shall he repent of a sin, the weight of which he cannot feel? How shall he pray for a blessing, the value of which he has no power to perceive? How shall he praise a God in whom he feels no interest, and in whose existence he takes no delight?

I say that to all spiritual things the man is quite as unable as the dead are unable to the natural works and services of daily life. And yet, says one, we heard you last Lords Day tell these dead people to repent and be converted. I know you did and you shall hear me yet again do the like. But why do I speak to the dead thus, and tell them to perform actions which they cannot do? Because my Master bids me, and as I obey my Masters errand, a power goes forth with the Word spoken and the dead awake in their sleep! They wake through the quickening power of the Holy Spiritand they who naturally cannot repent and believedo repent and believe in Jesus and escape from their former sins and live!

But, believe me, it is no power of theirs which makes them thus awake from their death-sleep, and no power of mine which arrests the guilty, slumbering conscienceit is a Divine power which God has yoked with the Word which He has given forth when it is fully and faithfully preached. Therefore have we exercised ourselves in our daily calling of bidding dead men livebecause life comes at the Divine bidding. But dead they are, most thoroughly so, and the longer we live the more we feel it to be so! And the more closely we review our own condition before conversion, and the more studiously we look into our own condition even now, the more fully do we know that man is dead in sin, and life is a gift, a gift from Heavena gift of undeserved love and Sovereign Graceso that the living must every one of them praise God and not themselves.

One of the saddest reflections about poor dead human nature is what it will be. Death in itself, though a solemn matter, is not so dreadful as that which comes of it. Many a time when that dear corpse has first been forsaken of the soul, those who have lost a dear one have been glad to imprint that cold brow with kisses. The countenance has looked even more lovely than in life! And when friends have taken the last glimpse, there has been nothing revolting, but much that was attractive. Our dead ones have smiled like sleeping angels, even when we were about to commit them to the grave. Ah, but we cannot shake from us a wretched sense of what is sure to be revealed before long.

It is only a matter of time before corruption must set in, and it must bring with it its daughter putridity, and by-and-by, the whole must be so noxious that if you had kept it above ground so long, you would vehemently cry with Abraham, Bury my dead out of my sight! for the natural and inevitable result of death is corruption. So it is with us all. Some are manifestly corruptah, how soon! While yet they are youths we see them plunging into infamous vice. They are corrupt in the tongue with lying words and lascivious speaking. They are corrupt in the eyes with wanton glancescorrupt, certainly at heart, and then corrupt thoroughly in life.

There are many about us in the streets every day, the stink of whose corruption compels us to put them out of society, for we are very decent. Even those who are dead, themselves, are very scrupulous not to associate with those who are too far gone in corruption. The dead bury their dead and roll the stone and put away the debauched and dissolute. We do not ask the rotten sinners into our households because they might corrupt us too fast. And we flatter ourselves that we are so much superior, whereas they are only a stage or two ahead in a race which all unregenerate men are running.

This corruption, though not developed in all to the same extent visibly, will be plain enough at the last in another world. When God finds us dead, He will cast us out where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. What will be the development of an unregenerate character in Hell, I cannot tell, but I am certain it will be something which my imagination dares not now attempt to depict, for all the restraints of this life which have kept men decent and moral will be gone when they come into the next world of sin!

And as Heaven is to be the perfection of the saints holiness, so Hell will be the perfection of the sinners loathsomenessand there will he discover, and others will discoverwhat sin is when it comes to its worst. When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. And this, dear Hearer, do we solemnly remind you will be your portion forever and ever, unless God is pleased to quicken you. Unless you are made to live together with Christ, you will be in this world dead, perhaps in this world corrupt, but certainly so in the next world where all the dreadful influences of sin will be developed and discovered to the very fullestand you shall be cast away from the Presence of God and the glory of His power.

There can be no death in Heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. And if you have not been renewed in the spirit of your mind within those pearly gates you can never have your portion. And where the light of Heaven shines in perpetual noonday your lot can never be cast. Weigh these thoughts, I pray you. If they are not according to this Book, reject them! But as they most certainly are, refuse them at your own peril. But rather, let them take possession of your careful spirit and lead you to seek and find eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. We now change the subject for something more pleasant, and observe A MIRACLE, or dead men made alive! The great object of the Gospel of Christ is to create men anew in Christ Jesus. It aims at resurrection and accomplishes it. The Gospel did not come into this world merely to restrain the passions or educate the principles of men, but to infuse into them a

new life which, as fallen men, they did not possess. I saw yesterday what seemed to me a picture of those preachers whose sole end and aim is the moralizing of their hearers, but who have not learned the need of supernatural life.

Not very far from the shore were a dozen or more boats at sea dragging for two dead bodies. They were using their lines and grappling irons, and what with hard rowing and industrious sailing, were doing their best most commendably to fish up the lost ones from the pitiless sea. I do not know if they were successful, but if so, what further could they do with them but decently to commit them to their mother earth? The process of education and everything else, apart from the Holy Spirit, is a dragging for dead mento lay them out decently, side by side, in the order and decency of deathbut nothing more can man do for man.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has a far other and higher task. It does not deny the value of the moralists efforts, or decry the results of education, but it asks what more can you doand the response is, Nothing. There it bids the bearers of the bier stand away and make room for Jesus, at whose voice the dead arise. The preacher of the Gospel cannot be satisfied with what is done in drawing men out of the sea of outward sinhe longs to see the lost life restoredhe desires to have breathed into them a new and superior life to what they have possessed before. Go your way, Education, do your best, you are useful in your sphere! Go your way, teacher of morality, do your best, you, too, are useful in your own manner. But if it comes to what man really needs for eternity, you, all put together, are of little worththe Gospel, and the Gospel alone, answers mens requirementsman must be regenerated, quickened, made anewhave fresh breath from Heaven breathed into him or the work of saving him is not begun.

The text tells us that God has done this for His people, for those who trust in Him. Let us observe the dry bones as they stir and stand before the Lord. And observing, let us praise the Lord that according to His great love with which He loved us, He has quickened us together with Christ. In this idea of quickening, there is a mystery. What is that invisible something which quickens a man? Who can unveil the secret? Who can track life to its hidden fountain? Brother, you are a living child of Godwhat made you live? You know that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the language of the text, you trace it to God. You believe your new life to be of Divine implantation. You are a believer in the supernatural. You believe that God has visited you as He has not visited other men, and has breathed into you life. You believe rightly, but you cannot explain it. We know not of the wind, from where it comes or where it goes. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. He that should sit down deliberately and attempt to explain regeneration, and the source of it, might sit there till he grew into a marble statue before he would accomplish the task. The Holy Spirit enters into us, and we who were dead before to spiritual things, begin to live by His power and indwelling.

He is the great Worker, but how the Holy Spirit works is a secret that must be reserved for God Himself. We need not wish to understand the modeit is enough for us if we partake of the result. It is a great mystery, then, but while it is a mystery it is a great reality. We know and do testify, and we have a right to be believed, for we trust we have not forfeited our characters. We know and testify that we are now possessors of a life which we knew nothing of some years agothat we have come to exist in a new worldand that the appearance of all things outside of us is totally changed from what it used to be. Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new.

I bear witness that I am this day the subject of sorrows which were no sorrows to me before I knew the Lord, and that I am uplifted with joys which I should have laughed at the very thought of if anyone had whispered the name of them in my ears before the Divine life had quickened me. This is the witness of hundreds of us, and although others disbelieve us, they have no right to deny our consciousness because they have not partaken of the same. If they have never tried it, what should they know about it? If there should be an assembly of blind men, and one of them should have his eyes opened and begin to talk of what he saw, I can imagine the blind ones all saying, What a fool that man is! There are no such things.

Here I have lived in this world 70 years, says one, and I never saw that thing which he calls a color, and I do not believe in his absurd nonsense about scarlet and violet, and black and white! It is all foolery. Another wiseacre declares, I have been up and down the world, and all over it for 40 years, and I declare I never had the remotest conception of blue or green, nor had my father before me. He was a right good soul and always stood up for the grand old darkness. Give me, says he, a good stick and a sensible dog, and all your nonsensical notions about stars, and suns, and moons, I leave to fools who like them. The blind man has not come into the world of light and color, and the unregenerate man has not come into that world of spirit, and hence neither of them is capable of judging correctly.

I sat one day, at a public dinner, opposite a gentleman of the gourmand species who seemed a man of vast erudition as to wines, spirits and all the viands of the table. He judged and criticized at such a rate that I thought he ought to have been employed by our provision merchants as Taster in General! He had finely developed lips and he smacked them frequently. His palate was in a flue-critical condition. He was also as proficient in the quantity as in the quality, and disposed of meats and drinks in a most wholesale manner. His retreating forehead, empurpled nose and protruding lips made him, while eating at least, more like an animal than a man.

At last, hearing a little conversation around him upon religious matters, he opened his small eyes and his great mouth, and delivered himself of this sage utterance, I have lived 60 years in this world and I never felt or believed in anything spiritual in all my life. The speech was a needless diversion of his energies from the roast duck. We did not want him to tell us that. I, for one, was quite clear about it before he spoke. If the cat under the table had suddenly jumped on a chair and said the same thing, I should have attached as much importance to the utterance of the one as to the declaration of the other. And so, by one sin in one man and another in another man, they betray their spiritual death.

Until a man has received the Divine life, his remarks thereon, even if he is an archbishop, go for nothing. He knows nothing about it according to his own testimonythen why should he go on to try to beat down with sneers and sarcasms those who solemnly avow that they have such a life, and that this life has become real to themso real that the mental life is made to sink into a subordinate condition compared with the spiritual life which reigns within the soul? This life brings with it the exercise of renewed faculties. The man who begins to live unto God has powers now which he never had beforethe power to really pray, the power to heartily praise, the power to actually commune with God, the power to see God, to talk with Godthe power to receive tidings from the invisible world and the power to send messages up through the veil which hides the unseen up to the very Throne of God!

Now the man, instead of asking, Is there a God? feels that there is not a place where God is not! He sees God in everything! He hears Him in the wind, discerns Him in every creature that surrounds him. Now the man, instead of dreading God and betaking himself to some outward form, ceremony, or other outward way of pushing God further off, puts away his ceremonies, casts away the beggarly elements which once might have pleased him and draws near to his God in spirit, and speaks with him. Father, he says, and God owns the kindred. I wish we all possessed this life, and I pray if we have it not that God may send it to us. If we have it not, the testimony of the Word of God is that we are dead when most we seem to be alive.

I shall not, however, keep you longer upon this quickening except to say that you may easily image to yourself the inward experience of a man who receives new life from the dead. You may conceive it by the following picture. Suppose a man to have been dead and to have been buried like others in some great necropolis, some city of the dead, in the catacombs. An angel visits him and by mercys touch he lives! Now, can you conceive that mans first emotion when he begins to breathe? There he is in the coffinhe feels stifled, pent up. He had been there 20 years, but he never felt inconvenienced until now. He was easy enough, in his narrow cell, if ease can be where life is not. The moment he lives he feels a horrible sense of suffocationlife will not endure to be so hideously compressed and he begins to struggle for release.

He lifts with all his might that dreadful coffin lid! What a relief when the decaying plank yields to his pressure! So the ungodly man is content enough in his sinhis Sabbath-breaking, his covetousness, his worldlinessbut the moment God quickens him his sin is as a sepulcher to the living! He feels unutterably wretched. He is not in a congenial position and he struggles to escape. Often at the first effort the great black lid of blasphemy flies off, never to be replaced. Satan thought it was screwed down fast enough, and so it was for a dead man, but life makes short work of it and many other iniquities follow.

But to return to our resurrection in the vaultthe man gasps a minute and feels refreshed with such air as the catacomb affords him. But soon he has a sense of clammy damp about him and feels faint and ready to expire. So the renewed man at first feels little but his inability and groans after power. He cries, I want to repent. I want to believe in Jesus. I want to be saved. Poor wretch! He never felt that beforeof course he did not he was dead! Now he is alive and therefore he longs for the tokens, signs, fruits, and refreshments of

life. Do you not see our poor friend who has newly risen? He has slipped down from that niche in the wall where they laid him, and finding himself in a dark vault, he rubs his eyes to know whether he really is alive, or whether it is all a dream!

It is such a new thing, and as by the little glimmering of light that comes in he detects hundreds of others lying in the last sleep, and he says to himself, Great God! What a horrible place for a living man to be in! Can I be alive? He begins to wander about, searching for a door by which he may escape. He loathes those winding-sheets in which they wrapped him. He begins stripping them off. They are damp and mildewedthey do not suit a living man. Soon he cries out for helpperhaps there is some passerby who may hear him and he may be delivered from his confinement. So a man, who has been renewed by Divine Grace, when he partly discovers where he is, cries out, This is no place for me!

That giddy ballroomwhy, it was well enough for one who knew no better. That ale-bench was suitable for an unregenerate soulbut what can an heir of Heaven do in such places? Lord, deliver me! Give me light and liberty! Bring my soul out of prison that I may live and praise Your name. The man pines for liberty, and if, at last he stumbles to the door of the vault and reaches the open air, I think he drinks deep draughts of the blessed oxygen! How glad he is to look upon the green fields and the fresh flowers! You do not imagine that he will wish to return to the vaults again, do you? He will utterly forsake those gloomy abodes! He shudders at the remembrance of the past and would not, for all the world, undergo again what he has once passed through.

He is tenderly affected at every remembrance of the past and is especially fearful lest there should be others like himself, newly quickened, who may need a Brothers hand to set them at liberty. He loathes the place where once he slept so quietly. So the converted man dreads the thought of going back to the joys which once so thoroughly fascinated him. No, he says, they are no joys to me. They were joys well enough for my old state of existence, but now, having entered into a new life, a new world, they are more joys to me than the spade and shroud are joys to a living man, and I can only think of them with grief, and of my deliverance with gratitude.

III. I must pass on very briefly to the third point. The text indicates a SYMPATHYHe has quickened us together with Christ. What does that mean? It means that the life which lives in a saved man is the same life which dwells in Christ! To put it simplywhen Elisha had been buried for some years, we read that they threw a dead man into the tomb where the bones of Elisha were, and no sooner did the corpse touch the Prophets bones than it lived at once!

Yonder is the Cross of Christ, and no sooner does the soul touch the crucified Savior than it lives at once, for the Father has given to Him to have life in Himself, and life to communicate to others. Whoever trusts Christ has touched Him, and by touching Him he has received the virtue of eternal life! To trust in the Savior of the world is to be quickened through Him. We are quickened together with Christ in three senses first, representatively. Christ represents us before the Eternal Throne. He is the second Adam to His people. So long as the first Adam lived the race lived, and so long as the second Adam lives, the race represented by Him lives before God. Christ is accepted, Believers are accepted. Christ is justified, the saints are justified. Christ lives, and the saints enjoy a life which is hid with Christ in God.

Next we live by union with Christ. So long as the head is alive the members have life. Unless a member can be severed from the head and the body maimed, it must live so long as there is life in the head. So long as Jesus lives, every soul that is vitally united to Him, and is a member of His body, lives according to our Lords own word, Because I live you shall live also. Poor Martha was much surprised that Christ should raise her brother from the dead, but He said, as if to surprise her still more, Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? This is one of the things we are to believethat when we have received the spiritual life it is in union with the life of Christand consequently can never die! Because Christ lives, our life must abide in us forever.   
Then we also live together with Christ as to likeness. We are quickened together with Christ, that is, in the same manner. Now Christs quickening was in this wiseHe was dead through the Law, but the Law has no more dominion over Him now that He lives again. So you, Christian, you are cursed by the old Law of Sinai, but it has no power to curse you now, for you are risen in Christ. You are not under the Lawits terrors and threats have nothing to do with you. Of our Lord it is written, In that He lives, it is said, He lives unto God. Christs life is a life unto God! Such is yours. You are not, therefore, to live unto the flesh or to mind the things of itbut God, who gave you life, is to be the great Object of your life. In Him you live, and for Him you live.

Moreover, it is said, Christ, being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. In that same way the Christian lives. He shall never go back to his spiritual deathhaving once received Divine life, he shall never lose it. God plays not fast and loose with His chosen. He does not save today, and damn tomorrow. He does not quicken us with the inward life and then leave us to perish. Divine Grace is a living, incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. The water that I shall give him, says Jesus, shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Glory be to God, then, you who live by faith in Christ live an immortal life, a life dedicated to God, a life of deliverance from the bondage of the Law! Rejoice in it, and give your God all the praise!

IV. And this brings us to the last word, which was A SONG. We have not time to sing itwe will just write the score before your eyes and ask you to sing it at your leisureyour hearts making melody to God. Brothers and Sisters, if you have, indeed, been thus made alive as others are not, you have first of all, in the language of the text, to praise the great love of God, great beyond all precedent! It was love which made Him breathe into Adam the breath of life and make poor clay to walk and speak.

But it is far greater love which makes Him now, after the Fall has defiled us, renew us with a second and yet higher life. He might have made new creatures by millions out of nothing. He had but to speak and angels would have thronged the air, or, beings like ourselves, only pure and unfallen, would have been multiplied by myriads upon the greensward. If He had left us to sink to Hell as fallen angels had done before us, who could have impugned His justice? But His great love would not let Him leave His elect to perish. He loved His people and therefore He would cause them to be born again. His great love with which He loved us defied death, and Hell, and sin!

Dwell on the theme, you who have partaken of this love! He loved us the most unworthywho had no right to such love! There was nothing in us to love and yet He loved usloved us when we were dead! Here His great love seems to swell and rise to mountainous dimensionslove to miserable sinners, love to loathsome sinnerslove to the dead and to the corrupt! Oh, heights and depths of Sovereign Grace! Where are the notes which can sufficiently sound forth your praise? Sing, O you redeemed, of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins! And cease not to praise God as you think of the riches of His mercy, for we are told that He is rich in mercy, rich in His Nature as to mercy, rich in His Covenant as to treasured mercy, rich in the Person of His dear Son as to purchased mercy, rich in Providential mercybut richest of all in the mercy which saves the soul.

Friends, explore the mines of Jehovahs wealth if you can. Take the key and open the granaries of your God and see the stores of love which He has laid up for you. Strike your sweetest notes to the praise of God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He has loved us! And let the last note and the highest and the loudest of your song be that with which the text concludes, By Grace are you saved.

O never stammer there! Brothers and Sisters, whatever you dohold or do not holdnever be slow to say this, If saved at all, I am saved by GraceGrace in contradistinction to human merit, for I have no merit. Grace in contradistinction to my own free will, for my own free will would have led me further and further from God. Preventing Grace brought me near to Him. Do bless and magnify the Grace of God, and as you owe all to it, cry, Perish each thought of pride! Consecrate yourself entirely to the God to whom you owe everything! Desire to help to spread the savor of that Divine Grace which has brought such good things to you. Vow, in the name of the quickening Spirit, that He who has made you live by faith shall, from this day till you enter into Heaven, have the best of your thoughts, and your words, and your actionsfor you are not your own you have been quickened from the dead and you must live in newness of life.

The Lord bless you, dear Friends. If you have never spiritually lived, may He give you Grace to believe in Jesus this morning, and then you are alive from the dead. And if you are alive already, may He quicken you yet more and more by His eternal Spirit till He brings you to the land of the living on the other side of the Jordan. Amen.

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SALVATION BY GRACE   
NO. 2741

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, AUGUST 25, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1859.

**By Grace you are saved.   
Ephesians 2:5.**

THE cardinal error against which the Gospel of Christ has to contend is the effect of the tendency of the human heart to rely upon salvation by works. The great antagonist to the Truth of God, as it is in Jesus, is that pride of man which leads him to believe that he can be, at least in part, his own savior. This error is the prolific mother of multitudes of heresies! It is through this falsehood that the pure stream of the Truth of God has been tainted so that, instead of flowing on in one clear pure river, it has been sadly polluted. There have been many who have sought to hinder the flowing of the Water of Life, or to divert the stream from its proper current. Many have tried to mingle the fancies and fallacies of men with the Truth as it is in Jesus, in order, thereby, to make it more palatable to poor, fallen, human nature.

It is my belief that all great reforms in the Church of Christ must have for their basis the declaration of the Doctrine revealed in my textBy Grace you are saved. The tendency of the Church, like that of the world, is to fly away from this Truth which is really the sum and substance of the Gospel. A departure from this Doctrine is, in my opinion, the essence of those many errors which, springing up from time to time, have troubled and divided the Church and marred the beauty of the spouse of Christ.

In all times, whenever this Doctrine has been obscured, the Church has become either heretical or Laodicean. She has either held some dangerous and damnable heresy, or she has held only a portion of the Truth and held it with so feeble a grasp that it has lost its ancient power in her handsso that her enemies have prevailed against her. The mightiest men in all ages of the Churchs historythose who have been the means of bringing the greatest good into her midst, and the most usefulness into the worldhave been those who, rising up like Samson when called to do valiant deeds on behalf of Israel, have made this the distinguishing characteristic of their ministrythe Doctrine of Salvation by Grace in contradistinction of salvation by works.

In Augustines day, there had been a grievous falling away from the simplicity of the Gospel. And when he arose and preached to the world this glorious Truth of God, there was an influence for good which, I believe, staved off the great Romish heresy, at least for a time. Had the Church and the world but listened to his voice and accepted his teaching, Popery would have been an impossibility! Then later, when Romanism had waxed exceedingly strong, the Lord raised up Martin Luther who taught this as the great central Truth of Christianity, that sinners are justified by faithnot by works. After Luther came another distinguished teacher of the Doctrine of GraceJohn Calvin, a man far better instructed in the Truth of the Gospel than even Martin Luther wasand he pushed this grand Doctrine to its legitimate consequences. Luther had, as it were, undammed the stream of Truth by breaking down the barrier which had kept back the living waters in the great reservoirbut the stream was turbid and carried down with it much that ought to have been left behind. Then Calvin came and cast salt into the waters and purified them, so that they flowed on in a clear, sweet, pure stream to gladden and refresh the Church of God and to quench the thirst of poor parched sinners.

Calvin preached, as his great staple Doctrine, the great Truth in my text, By Grace you are saved. It is common, in these days, to call those ministers who dwell mainly upon this Doctrine, Calvinists. But we do not accept that title without qualification. We are not ashamed of it and we would rather be called Calvinists than have any other name except that which is our true one. We hold and assert again and again, that the Truth of God which Calvin preached, the Truth of God which Augustine thundered out with all his mightwas the very Truth of God which the Apostle Paul had long before written in his Inspired Epistles and which is most clearly revealed in the discourses of our blessed Lord Himself! We desire to preach the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth of God! We are not the followers of any mere manwe do not derive our Inspiration from Calvins Institutes and Commentaries, but from the Word of God itself! Yet we hold the Doctrines commonly called, Calvinism, to be none other than the essential basement Doctrines of our holy faith. These were the truths that Whitefield preached and that produced the great revival in his days! And these must be the Doctrines to which the Church of God must again return, if the Church of Rome is to be razed to its deep foundations, or souls to be converted in great multitudes, or the Kingdom of Christ to come!

My text relates to the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace and, coming to it, I ask you to notice, first, that the Apostle addresses certain people who were saved. Next, I want you to notice the meanings of the term, Grace, as applied in the Scriptures. And I shall finish with some consolatory and practical inferences.

I. In the first place, THE APOSTLE ADDRESSES CERTAIN PEOPLE, TO WHOM HE SAYS, YOU ARE SAVED. He does not say, You shall be saved, or, You hope to be saved. He speaks to them as persons already saved. Now, there are no people on the face of the earth who can be correctly described as saved unless it can also be said of them that they are saved by Grace!

I see two things in this part of my text and, first, the Apostle mentions a present salvation. He speaks not to people who were to be saved when they died, or who hoped to be saved in some future state, but he addresses those who actually were savedwho had salvation, not in prospect, but in present enjoymentwho had passed out of a state of condemnation into that of salvation and who looked upon their salvation as being as sure, as certain, as really theirs as their houses, their lands, or their lives!

A present salvation cannot consistently be preached by any beside those who hold the Doctrine that salvation is by Grace. Is there a Roman Catholic, in the whole world, who, in harmony with his own creed, can say that he is saved? No, there is not one! In fact, lying as that creed does, it does not profess to put anyone into a position in which he can say, I am saved. No, the Romish Church not only postpones salvation to the day of death, but positively beyond it! There was Daniel OConnell, of whom the Pope said that he was his greatest subject in Europeyet it is not many years ago that we were informed that he was in purgatory. It was a hard thing that such a faithful disciple of the Pope should be sent there, yet he was no worse off than the bishops, archbishops and cardinals, for, according to the Romish teaching, they all go to purgatory! Of course, the Pope lets them out after a certain time, but that is all he professes to offersalvation after a future indefinite periodhe never pretends to say to anyone, You are saved now. That would be a lie too gross even for the Pope and priests of Rome to utter! There is no such thing as a present salvation in the whole of the Romish Church.

Nor is this possible under any system except that of salvation by Grace. Bring up the good Dissenters, and the good Churchmen, the men and women who are regular in their attendance on outward ordinances. Whatever the ceremonies of their church may be, they observe them with the most indefatigable industry. They have been baptized and confirmed. They have taken the sacrament, or sat at the communion tableaccording to the phraseology of their different churchesand they believe that, by their constant attention to the outward observances of worship, they will assuredly be saved! But speak to any one of these people, and ask if he can say, I know that my sins are forgivenhe will be astonished at your enquiry, and will reply, I would not have the presumption to say such a thing!

Appeal to the very best of them, the most devoted, the most earnest, the most indefatigable of those who are seeking salvation by their own works, and ask if they have obtained eternal life. You cannot find one who has done sothey are all hoping that, through the mercy of God, they may somehow and sometime be savedbut none of them will declare that they are now saved. From those who join us in church fellowship, I frequently hear such remarks as this, I attended my church every day in the week. I repeated the prayers regularly, but I never found any rest to my soul until I trusted wholly in Christ. From others who attended certain Dissenting places of worship, I have had such expressions as this, I went up to the House of God and I heard my minister exhort me to be patient in sickness, to love my God and my neighbor, and I tried to do my best to obey his exhortations, but I never could say that I was a saved man, or use the confident language of the spouse, My Beloved is mine, and I am His, until I learned that salvation is all of Grace and, by His Grace, trusted in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No, my dear Friends, under the theory of salvation by works, whatever form it may takewhether it appears in the garb of Popery, or hides itself under the veil of Protestantismit is always substantially the samea mans own works cannot pretend to offer to him the blessing of a present salvation! Take the Arminian theory, which is the least objectionable of all forms of salvation by workscut it asunderand you will find that there is a strong taint of Popery even there.

But, asks someone, do not Arminians rejoice to say that they are already saved? Yes, but their assertion is contradicted by the assurance which they will give you directly afterwards, that they may finally perish. Although they are now saved, their safety is something like that of a wrecked mariner who, after being tossed to and fro in a stormy sea, is washed up on a rock, from which he may presently be hurled back into the raging billows! Their safety is not like that of the man who has been carried into the lighthouse, or brought to land in the lifeboat, for they believe that, after all they have experienced, they may be lost. It is not salvation that the Arminian possesseshe is only in a

salvable state. His condition is that of a man who, if he continues to repent and believe, shall be saved, but he is not truly saved now he has not been built upon that sure, certain, solid foundation upon which the true Believer is resting. He cannot sing, with Toplady

*The terrors of Law, and of God   
With me can have nothing to do!   
My Saviors obedience and blood   
Hide all my transgressions from view!   
My name from the palms of His hands   
Eternity will not erase   
Impressed on His heart it remains   
In marks of indelible Grace.   
Yes, I to the end shall endure,   
As sure as the earnest is given   
More happy, but not more secure,   
The glorified spirits in Heaven!*

Such a salvation as thata present one, enjoyed now in all its fullness, in all its riches, in all its boundless lengths, and breadths, and depths and heightsis not possible under any other system but that of salvation by Grace, and by Grace alone! We, of all men living, who preach the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, can proclaim a present salvation in all its fullness.

In our text we also see that the Apostle speaks of a perfect salvation. We teach that the moment a man believes in Christ, he is not merely put into a salvable state, not half savedhe is not placed in a position where, if he remains, he will be saved, but concerning which there is a fear that he may fall from itbut that he is already completely saved! I verily believe that the saints in Heaven, albeit they have received the crown of salvation, are not, as to its essential reality, more truly saved than the meanest and weakest Believer in Christ who is struggling through floods of temptation here upon earth.   
For what is it to be saved? It is to have sin forgiven and to be accepted in the Beloved. The moment a sinner believes in Jesus, his sins are as much pardoned as they ever will be! They are as fully and as finally blotted out of Gods Book of Remembrance as they would be if he should live a thousand years of piety. He is as completely clear, as far as the forgiveness of his sins is concerned, as he will be when he stands at the right hand of the Judge at the Last Great Day.

To be saved, however, includes more than forgiveness of sinsit includes the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and, in this sense, also, the meanest Believer in Him is as much saved as the celestial spirits in the Paradise above. Is the robe of Christs righteousness spread over the Apostles? So is it, at this hour, around the poorest person on earth who is trusting in Jesus! Are those who sing Gods praises before His Throne in Glory clothed in the fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints? Even so are all Believers here below! Each saint is, as John Kent says

*With his spotless vesture on,   
Holy as the Holy One.*

Covered with Christs righteousness, God sees no spot in His people! But, asks someone, are not the saints in Heaven more secure than   
Believers on earth? Believers on earth are not secure from temptation,   
but they are secure from destructionnot from tribulation, but from   
condemnation! They are not exempt from care, woe and suffering, but  
they are forever delivered from the wrath of God and the damnation of   
Hell. Not an angel in Heaven is more certain of the eternal love of God   
than is the feeblest Believer upon earth! If your soul is committed to the   
hands of Christ, you can never perish! I speak no more strongly than His   
own utterances warrant, for Jesus has said, My sheep hear My voice,  
and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life;   
and they shall never perish. To the woman at the well of Sychar, our Savior said, Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never   
thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water   
springing up into everlasting life. We are complete in Himperfected in   
all the essentials of salvation!   
Now, mark, under no system of Doctrine whatever is perfect salvation   
in this world contemplated except under that scheme which teaches that   
we are saved by Grace. Under the plan of salvation proposed by the   
work-mongers, there is no completeness in any of its aspects. Under the   
old Mosaic dispensation in which God most clearly revealed Himself as   
the Judge of His people, all those sacrifices which they offered year by  
year continually could not make the comers thereunto perfect. There   
was, in those sacrifices, a remembrance again made of sins every year.   
However attentive they might be to all the observances of the Ceremonial  
Law, their salvation was not perfect. But Christ, by one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified and, therefore, He has sat down  
at the right hand of God.   
Now if under that noblest form of the Covenant of Works, complete  
salvation was not to be secured, how is it likely to be attained in any of  
those corrupt systems in which, while men profess to set aside the old Covenant of Works, they yet expect to find salvation? No man but he who believes the Doctrines of Grace talks about being completely saved. Ask the Arminianthe fairest and best specimen, sometimes the best of men, though miserably mistaken as to his beliefswhat can he say? He tells you that if he perseveres in well-doing, in faith and in repentance, he will be saved. Ask him whether he is completely saved, or whether there is something more yet to be done and he will tell you that there is many a step yet to be taken before he will reach full salvation. He may talk about  
a finished righteousness, but he does not know how it is attained! We hold that Believers are complete in Christ even now and that, die   
whenever they may, they will enter into His Presence as being already  
perfect in Him. Oh, how sweet it is to enjoy a present salvation, which is,  
at the same time, a perfect salvation! How grateful should we be that it is   
presented to us in the Covenant of Grace and that it is revealed to us in  
those blessed portions of Holy Scripture which tell us of the wonderful  
Grace of God which He has manifested towards His people! You are   
saved. Oh, how sweet are these words! Pause, Beloved, a moment or   
two, and rejoice over them. You are savedsaved now, at this present   
instantif you are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ!   
II. Now we are to notice THE MEANINGS OF THE TERM, GRACE, AS   
EMPLOYED IN THE SCRIPTURESBy Grace you are saved. First, it means that if we are saved, it must be a matter of free favor.  
There is nothing in us that could ever merit Gods esteem, or give Him   
such delight as to lead Him to bestow upon us the blessings of eternal   
salvation. If we ask why any individuals are rescued from the ruins of the   
Fall and enabled to believe in Jesus, the only answer is, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. Certainly, we were not saved   
because of our talents, for the most talented often remain unconverted.   
We were not saved because of our wealth, for most of us have none. We   
were not saved because of the excellence of our disposition, or the holiness of our character, for, even since our conversion, we cannot think of  
our best services without shame and confusion of face. If I look upon the   
people of God, either in the mass or as individuals, instead of imagining   
that there was anything in them to cause God to love them, I am compelled to say that there seems to have been far more to move Him to destroy them than to save them! Will not all Believers here confess that  
they are saved not because of anything good in them, but because of  
Grace most full, and free, and unconstrained?   
Further, we are saved by Grace as a matter of Divine operation. From   
the first holy desire in the soul, to the last shout of victory in the dying  
hour, salvation is by the operation of the Almighty. Whatever is not  
worked in you, by Gods Grace, will be an injury, not a blessing, to you. If  
any of you have a faith, or a repentance, or any condition of heart or life   
which is of your own making, get rid of it, for there is nothing good in it!   
That so-called faith which is not the gift of God is really presumption  
and that repentance which is not godly sorrow worked by God in the   
soul, needs to be repented of! I am sure that all there is of good in any   
saint must have been put there by the Holy Spirit, for it would not have   
sprung up of itself. Human hearts will naturally grow weeds, but not those rare exotics, those flowers of Heaven, the Christian Graces! These must be Divinely implanted and nurtured, and grow up entirely by the   
exercise of that same Omnipotence which raised Christ from the dead! I will go even further and say that if Divine Grace should carry us   
every inch of the road to Heaven but one, we would be lost because of   
that last inch! If, in the edifice of our souls salvation, there is even one   
stone left for us to put in its place, unassisted by Gods Grace, that  
building will never be completed! From first to last, all must be of Grace.  
I agree with the highest doctrinalist upon this point, that there is not,   
and there cannot be a good thing in the heart of any man if it was not  
worked there by the Sovereign Grace of God.   
Well, but, says one, is it not the duty of men to repent and to believe? Certainly it is, but I am not speaking of their duty. Their lack of   
power does not excuse them from obedience to Gods command. If a man   
owed another a thousand pounds, it would be his duty to pay his debt,   
whether he had the ability or not. And, inasmuch as it is mans duty to  
repent and to believe, herein is the Glory of Gods Grace made manifest,   
in that He accomplishes, by his Grace, what man could never have done!  
I can truly say that as far as I have gone in the Divine life, there has been  
nothing good in me but that which has come from God. Let others give   
their own testimonyif they have any good thing which they have produced, let them glory in it! But I have nothing whereof to glory and must   
say to the Lord, You have worked all my works in me as far as they have   
been any good, but, as for myself, I would cover my face and cry, Unclean, unclean, unclean. Lord, have mercy upon Your servant!

III. Now, to close, I want to draw some CONSOLATORY AND PRACTICAL INFERENCES.   
First, how humble that man ought to be who is saved by Grace! The   
Arminian says that he can stand or fall according to his own will. Ought  
he not to be proud? What a fine fellow he is! Sing a Psalm in your own  
honor, Sir, and when you get to Heaven, take all the glory to yourself!   
You say that you have done part yourselfyou admit that the Lord did a   
great deal for you, but that your own free will settled the matter. Very   
well, then, give the glory to yourselfsing your own praises forever and   
ever! But the true Believer says, I was as clay in the hands of the potter  
when the Lord began with me. I was senseless, dead, corrupt, till the   
Lord took me in hand and quickened and changed me, and made me  
what I amand I would go back to what I was before if He did not keep   
me by His Grace. But I know that what His Grace has commenced, He   
will certainly complete, and to Him be all the Glory!   
Next, if we are saved by Grace, we, of all people, should have compassion on those who are out of the way. If we are on the road to Heaven, we   
were brought onto it by Grace and, therefore, we ought to be very considerate of those who are not on it. That good man, John Newton, used to  
say, A Calvinist who gets angry with the ungodly is inconsistent with  
his profession. He knows that no man can receive this Doctrine except by  
the Grace of Godso, if God has not given to these men the Grace to receive this Doctrine, rather pray for them than get angry with themand   
ask that they may receive the Truth in which your soul delights. Then, once again, here is a word of comfort. If we are savedare   
saved, mark youwhat shall make us sad and unhappy at heart? Oh!  
says one, I am so poor. Yes, but you are saved! You are a Believer in  
Christ, so you are saved. But, says another, I am so afflicted. Yes, but  
you are saved. But, says another, I am often so neglected and despised. Yes, but you are saved. Oh, what joy would that thought have   
caused, a little while ago, when the burden of all your sins was upon  
you! You used to say, Oh, if I could but be sure that I was saved, I would   
not mind if I had nothing but a crust of bread and a cup of water! If I  
could but know that my sins were forgiven, I would not mind being shut   
up anywhere in the world! If I might know that I was Christs, the world   
might say what it liked about me.   
Now you do know it, for you are on the Rock and you are savedso   
why are you sad? You may now be despised, but, remember, the time is   
coming when you shall be glorified with Christ! You may be now forgotten by your friends, but your Saviors eyes are on you and your name is  
on His heart! You are sad, yes, but you are secure! If you believe in Jesus, you may be cast down but you cannot be destroyed! You may be   
forsaken for a while, but you can never be cast away! Come then *Children of the heavenly King,   
As you journey, sweetly sing   
Sing your Saviors worthy praise,   
Glorious in His works and ways.*   
Lastly, one word to those who cannot say that they are saved. My dear  
Friends, there is very much in this text that should cheer and comfort   
you. The men who are saved are saved by Graceby Gods free favor.  
There was nothing in them to recommend them to God. You have been  
confessing, O Lord, I do not feel as I ought to feel He does not want   
your feelings as a recommendation. If saved, you are to be saved as a   
matter of free favor and not as a matter of merit in any sense whatever.  
But, says one, I cannot repent, I cannot believe. My dear Friend, you   
are not going to be saved by anything that you can do in your own   
strength. You need repentance. Do not try to work it for yourselfthe   
Lord will work repentance in you. You need faith. Do not go about to   
seek faith in yourselfyou will never find it thereseek it from Christ.   
He is the Author as well as the Finisher of faith!   
By Grace you are saved. Go and carry this text into every den and   
sty of pollution in London! Tell it to the murderer, the thief, the blasphemer, the harlot! Tell it to the man who cannot repent, and cannot pray,   
and cannot believe! Tell him that salvation is by Grace, and is worked in  
us by God the Holy Spirit and, as the hymn says   
*Heaven with the echo shall resound,   
And all the earth shall hear.*

Go, then, my Brothers and Sisters, and spread the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, for this old watchword of the Church is the source of her victory! And when once this shall be her battle-cry, her triumph is sure! The headstone of Gods spiritual temple shall be brought forth with shouts, crying, Grace, Grace unto it.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**1 CORINTHIANS 12; 13:1-3.**

1 Corinthians 12:1, 2. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led. Although the members of the church at Corinth were highly favored with spiritual gifts, they do not seem to have known how to use them. Paul points out to them, in this chapter, how ignorant they were concerning the very gifts which they possessed. They did not know how to put them to proper use in the service of God. The Apostle, therefore, reminds these gift-exalted Corinthians that, only a little while before, they were heathens, carried away by lies and superstition, and worshipping dumb idols. They had nothing, therefore, to boast of and it is probable that if we look back to the hole of the pit from where we were dug, we shall find no more occasion for boasting than they had.

3. Therefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed. I suppose that in their assemblies, where everybody talked who liked, there were some people who even spoke blasphemy. They professed to be under the guidance of the Spirit of God and yet they stood up and called Jesus accursed. Where there is no rule nor order, there is pretty sure to be something very mischievous before long. Paul gives them to understand that this kind of talk could not go unrebuked.

3. And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. If a man really knows Jesus as his Lord, and he declares that Truth of God, then you may fully accept it as being in harmony with the teaching of the Spirit of God.

4-7. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit all. It is given in order that he may, himself, profit, and also that he may be the means of profiting those who hear him.

8. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom. He is prudent an experienced manfit to lead the young, the feeble and those who are less instructed than he is himself.

8. To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. He has a wide range of practical acquaintance with Gods Word and though he may not be so judicious as the Brother who was just mentioned, yet he is a man of knowledge.

9. To another faith by the same Spirit. Paul probably means here some special kind of faith. Perhaps the faith that enabled its possessor to work miracles.

9, 10. To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits. So that he is able to detect the impostors who come even into the nominal Church of Christ. They did come then, and they will continue to come even to the end.

10, 11. To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongue: but all these works that one and the same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. Whatever our gifts as a church, or as individuals, may be, they all come from the same Spirit. This should tend to promote unity among us. Let us all trace whatever gift we have to the hand that gave it, and to the Spirit that worked it. Let us feel that we are so many pipes connected with one fountain and, therefore, as all the good that we convey comes from the one Source, let us give all the honor and glory of it to the Spirit of God from whom it comes.

12. For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. That, is to say, Christ visiblethe Church of Christ. We are members of His mystical body. He is the Head, but all who are quickened by the Spirit of God are one with Him.

13, 14. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. By the way in which some people act, you might almost imagine that the body was one member and that the one member was a tonguebut it is not so. God never intended that in the assembly, all should speak. Let those speak to whom He has given the power to speak. He does not lay all burdens upon one backlet each man bear the personal burden which God has placed upon his back.

15. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? Where are you, dear child of God, who are in the position of the foot? Have you been comparing yourself with some eminent Christian who did much in his Masters service? And have you sorrowfully asked, Why cannot I do what he did? I am only a poor foot, always touching the ground, often limping and frequently needing to be washed. Well, suppose you could be made into a hand, it might be a gain to you in some respects, but it might be a loss to the rest of the body. It would certainly be a loss to any of you if your feet were to be turned into hands, for you have need of feet! And the Church, which is here called by the name of Christ, needs its feet as much as it needs its hands. The mercy is that even if you have, in your anxietyperhaps I ought to say in your

unbeliefbeen saying, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, it does not matter what you have said, for that does not alter the fact! Is it therefore not of the body? Of course, it is still of the body, whatever it may say!

16. And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? Oh, by no means! The ear has its proper purpose to fulfill. It is designed for a special service in the body which no other member can render. We must never compare ourselves among ourselves and wish to be somebody else. You are bad enough as you are, dear Friend, but you would probably be much worse if you were somebody else. You may think that you are a very poor ear, but you would decidedly make a much worse eye. Even if your ear is dull of hearing, it can, at any rate, hear better than it can see! It can do its own work better than it could do the work of any other member of the bodyand so can you as a member of Christs mystical body.

17, 18. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members, everyone of them in the body as it has pleased Him. That is the best rule for each part of our bodyas it has pleased Him. Could any of you suggest a better place for your eyes than where they are? We have read the old heathen fable of a giant who had one eye in the middle of his foreheadand whenever I have seen his portrait sketched by fancy, I have felt, at once, that it was no improvement upon the human face! No, the eyes are best where they areand so the earsand so is the mouth. They are all best just where they are. So are you, my Brother or my Sister, best where you are, if you are in the place where God evidently meant you to be.

19. And if they were all one member, where were the body? There would be no body at all!   
20, 21. But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you. You know how very quick the hand always is to go up to the eye when it is in danger. You do not have to wait to tell it what to do, but in an instant, the hand is up, for there is a feeling between the members of the same body. The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you. And the hand never feels that it may leave the eye to take care of itselfit is ready to protect it at once.   
21-23. Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. No, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. They are covered and concealed and so we take more trouble with them than we do with other parts of our body.  
24*.* For our comely parts have no need: but God has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked. Here is a lesson for us with regard to church fellowshipalways to take most notice of those who are the least noticeable, and to be most gentle with those who require the most tenderness. You know that there are some of our fellow members who are not all we should like them to be. We believe that they are children of God, but they are, somehow or other, cut on the cross. They are crotchety and weak in many ways. Now, we should try, as far as we can, to adapt ourselves to them. If you have ever had the gout very badly, you know that if a person walks across the room too heavily, you feel it. Do you, therefore, say to your father, when he is thus laid aside, You cannot expect me to take notice of such a thing as that? Nor would you be so cruel as to say to anybody else, If he has a gouty foot, I cannot help it and I shall tread on it every now and then. No, you are not so brutal as that! So, if there is a member of the body that is more tender than the rest, and especially if that tenderness is the result of disease, let us try to minister to it as far as we possibly can. Let us give more abundant honor to that part which lacks.

25. That there should be no schism in the body. That is, no division, no tear in the body.  
25, 26. But that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. I am afraid that this second half of the verse refers to a duty which is more neglected than is the other. It is an easier thing to suffer with those that suffer than it is to rejoice with those that rejoice. And I will tell you why it is sobecause, in giving compassion to those that suffer, you have some sense of dignity. Condescension is often a sort of pride, but when a Brother is better off than you arewhen he has more talent than you havewhen he is more successful than you arefor you to go and rejoice with him and be as glad as if it were all your own gladnessyes, to enter into his joy, and say, God be thanked, my Brother, for your prosperity! I would increase it if I could, for I feel that I am a partner with you!ah, this needs great Grace. So, may God continually give us more Grace and deliver us from everything like envy, which is of Satan, and yet is all too common even among professing Christians!   
27-31. Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God has set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.  
1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing. God grant us Grace, then, that we may abound in this most excellent Grace of a true Christian life which is infinitely more essential than the highest gifts or the most remarkable talents that God Himself can bestow upon us!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1665 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GRACE   
NO. 1665

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 18, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7.

FROM this verse it is clear that Paul fully expected the Gospel of the Grace of God to be preached in the ages to come. He had no notion of a temporary Gospel to develop into a better, but he was assured that the same Gospel would be preached to the end of the dispensation. Nor this alone, for as I take it, he looked to the perpetuity of the Gospel, not only through the ages which have already elapsed since the first Advent of our blessed Lord, but throughout the ages after He shall have come a second time. Eternity, itself will not improve upon the Gospel. When all the saints shall be gathered Home they shall still talk and speak of the wonders of Jehovahs love in Christ Jesus! And in the golden streets they shall stand up and tell what the Lord has done for them to listening crowds of angels, principalities and powers.

Paul did not believe in the quenching of the light of the testimony of Grace, but expected that throughout the ages to come it would burn on with the same brilliance. This I infer from the fact that he looked upon the believing Ephesians and himself as having been converted in the dawn of Christianity, on purpose, that to later ages they might serve as specimens of what the Gospel can do. He looked upon these Ephesians, newly drawn out from the cesspool of idolatry, in the same light as he looked upon himself when he said that the Lord had shown towards him all longsuffering for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on His name. Paul and these Ephesiansand all those early Christianswere types to us of what God can do by the Gospel and of what He will continue to do until the present dispensation shall close.

From this statement we may gather with most sure logic that the Gospel is altogether unalterable, for if its results 1,800 years ago are to serve us as proofs of its power, then it must be the same Gospel. It is clear that the converts of the first century would not be, to us, any kind of testimony to the power of the Gospel as it now exists among us if, meanwhile, there had been a change in the Gospel, itself! At best, such facts could only show what the old-fashioned Gospel did in its day, but we could not infer from them what a new-fangled Gospel will now accomplish. Paul did not at all anticipate any removal of the old landmarks. He held it forth that the same results would follow in all ages from the preaching of the same Gospel with the same power from Heaven and, therefore, he regarded the first converts as pledges and proofs to all succeeding ages of what the Gospel could achieve.

Hold, my Brothers and Sisters, to that Gospel which has been delivered unto you, which we have received by the Spirit of God through the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles, and you shall yet see repeated in your midst the same things which were worked in those early days! Those who will, may drink the new wine of the modern vintagemy conviction is that the old is better! Learn, also, from this language of Paul, that every age is a gainer by those which preceded it. I have smiled, often, in this place, at the conceit of this 19

th Century which holds up its head among the ages as far excelling them all, though if it knew itself, it would sing to a more modest tune. But now I will moderate my tone, and admit that this century is superior to all the ages that have been before itsuperior in this one respectthat it has received by the lapse of time the fullest and most repeated evidence of the Gospels power!

Whereas in the Second Century men could only refer to the experience of the saints during 100 years, we have, at this hour, the accumulated evidence of almost 1,900 yearsand all this is put in evidence as proof of what Divine Grace can do. Whereas in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries men had the accumulated personal testimonies of those who had, till then, believed in Christ and had been saved thereby, we, upon whom the ends of the earth have come, have now far larger evidence, because the time has supplied us with a greater cloud of witnesses! For nearly 2,000 years, this Gospel has been preached among men! And every year has brought fresh trophies to its powerevery day, I might say, is now producing evidence of its Divine power!

We have not, today, dear Friends, to begin to test the Gospel. The ice is broken for usexperiments have been made so frequently that we have now entered upon another stage. It is not ours to analyze the bread, but to feed upon it! We have not, today, to enquire, Can we ford the stream? Lo, these 19 centuries the hosts of God have gone through the flood in safety and we have but to join their ranks and follow where they lead the way! Surrounded by evidence that is altogether overwhelming, we behold the Gospel of Jesus going forth, conquering and to conquer! We hear from ten thousand times ten thousand voices the cry, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We cannot cease to proclaim the mercy of God as displayed in the atoning Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, for infallible assurances strengthen our confidence and set our hearts on fire!

The multitudes of converts in past time make known to us in these ages that there is salvationno, morethat this salvation is to be had, for they obtained it! No, furtherthat it is to be had upon the terms that God has laid down of simply believing in Jesus Christfor they obtained it in that way and in none other! Doubt ought now to be out of the question! Every needy, trembling sinner should hasten away to the refuge supplied by Jesus. Because so many have been to Him with success. Because He has never rejected any. Because He has saved to the uttermost all those that have come to Him, therefore sinful men ought eagerly and unquestioningly to come at once and put their confidence in the Lamb of God! Then will Gods purpose, as described in the text, be accomplished, that to the ages to come should be made known by all who have tasted of His kindness the exceeding riches of His Grace toward men in Christ Jesus the Savior!

This morning I have a text before me which is a great deal too full for meI can never draw out all its supplies. I have gone round the walls of this city text; I have counted its towers and marked well its bulwarks, but I am utterly unable to express myself by reason of joyous astonishment! I feel as if I must sit down and lose myself in adoration. I am a poor dumb dog over such a theme! I believe that if I were shut up to preach for 12 months from this text, I should not be straitened for matter, but rather, when I had finished the 52 Sabbaths, I should be eager to enter upon another years consideration of the same topic! Here is a vast and fruitful countrya land of hills and valleys, a land of fountains and brooks of waterwho shall spy it out and set the bounds thereof?

I shall try to exhibit a cluster from Eshcol, but the whole land I cannot show youit behooves you to journey there for yourselves. It is a right royal subject The exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Whitefield and Wesley might preach the Gospel better than I do, but they could not preach a better Gospel! I shall preach with the longing desire that others may be enticed to come and taste of the dainties of Christs marriage-feast. To this end I shall rehearse the loving kindnesses of the Lord. Oh that the Holy Spirit may help meand draw you!

We begin with I. THE KINDNESS OF THE LORD TOWARD US IN CHRIST JESUS. What kindness He displayed in choosing such sinners as we were! These Ephesians had been most superstitious idolaters. You know how loudly they shouted, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. There was no preparedness in them to cast away their idols and to worship the great Invisible God. There was nothing in them to draw them towards the light that shines in the Christ of God. They were far off, as Paul says, having no hope and really and truly without God in the worldand yet these were the very men whom the exceeding riches of Gods Grace brought out of darkness into the marvelous Light of God!

They were dead in trespasses and sins. They walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air. They fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were sunk in all manner of loathsome lusts and vices. And yet the Grace of God came to men of Ephesus and called out a Church to show forth the praises of God! Now, what were we, my Brothers and Sisters? We were not idolaters, nor sunk in all the degradation of Ephesus, but we were all sinners in some fashion or other. All the sheep went astraythough each one followed a different way, all took the downward roadand we among them. We, to the utmost of our power, fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and of the mind we did evil even as we could.

If it had not been for the restraints of education and the checks of our surroundings, I know not into what crimes we would not have plunged. It is a happy circumstance, for some of us, that God met with us very early, or else we would have been swept away by the torrents of our youthful passions into the worst possible vices. We always had a strong will, a firm purpose and courage equal to any daringthese qualities under the devils influence would soon have forced a passage to Hell for us! If we had been left to sow our wild oats, what a crop we would have had long before this. Thanks be to God for His preventing love! Alas, some, left to wander far, were allowed to prove, in their lives, the sin which dwelt in themand what a wonder of Grace, what a miracle of love that God should have selected them, after all, and brought them near to Himself!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I will not enlarge upon this, for this is a point for your private meditations. Shut yourselves up in your closets and think of what you were and what you would have been if it had not been for the kindness of God toward you in Christ Jesus. Forget not that the Lord has shown this kindness toward us in order that others like we are may be induced to believe in the same kindness. Are any here the children of pious parents who have done violence to your consciences? After the same fashion did many of us terribly rebeland yet the Lord has had mercy upon us! Have some of you fallen into the lusts of the flesh and followed after the pleasures of sin and thus defiled yourselves greatly? Do not despair of pardon, for there are some here who tearfully remember how the God of pardons forgave them after they had fallen into the same sins. Whatever form your transgression may take, God has saved others who fell into similar sins in order that in them He might make known to you His willingness to clasp you to His bosom and to cast your sins behind His back!

No doctrine, however clearly stated, will ever have such influence over men as living examples. When we can say of this one and of the other, These were great offenders. These were open sinners. These were grievous transgressors, but they obtained mercy, we do, in effect, say to all of the same character, Come, and you shall not be refused! Leave your sin as they have doneloathe it as they do! Trust in Jesus as they have been taught to do and you shall find equal mercy with them and shall rejoice in the common salvation. The kindness of God toward ushow I delight to dwell on the word, us, and then to take it up and acknowledge my own personal share in itthe kindness of God toward me! Do this, my Brethren, and then go and display to others the kindness of the Lord toward your own souls.

But our attention is called not only to the persons whom God chose, but to His kindness displayed in the gracious acts which He has done towards them. Mark the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us. What has He done for us? He chose us before He lit the stars, those torches of the sky! He wrote our names upon the heart and hands of Christ before He laid the foundations of the hills! In the fullness of time He gave Christ for us, even that blessed Christ of whom we say, Who loved me and gave Himself for me. He made with us in Christ Jesus a Covenant ordered in all things and sure which shall stand fast when all created things dissolve.

Having done this, He watched over us when we were bond-slaves to the tyrant Satan. Graciously He guarded us from going still further into transgression and committing the sin which is unto death. Then He called usand when we would not come He drew us yet more forcibly by His effectual Grace till, at last, we yielded. Oh, I cannot tell all that He did for us when we at last came to Jesus, but this I know, He washed us and we were whiter than snow! He brought forth the best robe and put it on us and made us comely in His sight. He gave us the kiss of sweet acceptance and He put us among the children. And since then He has given us the childrens portion and has dealt with us as He used to deal with those that love His name. We have been adopted into the family and we have lived on the childrens breadwe have been guided, led, instructed, upheld and sanctified! And the almighty Savior is still performing miracles of mercy for us!

The old tale of the giants piling mountain upon mountain, Pelion upon Ossa, is outdone by our God! He has not only heaped up one hill of mercy, but He has laid mountain upon mountainHe has piled up Alps upon Alps to make a pathway for us, that we may ascend to the right hand of God, even the Father, and sit in the heavenly places with Christ! What has He done? I answer, what has He not done? What more could He do? Can you suggest a mercy? He has already given it! Can you desire a favor? It is yours, already, and was yours from before the foundation of the world! Oh, the goodness, the manifold goodness, the overflowing, surpassing, inconceivable goodness of God in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus!

I am bound to dwell a moment on that last wordHis kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. That is the channel through which all blessing has come to us! God gives common mercies to men as His creatures, but these riches of His Grace, these Covenant blessings, all come to us as His chosen, through the Mediator! You can see the mark of the Cross on every spiritual favor which the Father has bestowedsome drops of bloody sweat have fallen upon every treasured gem of the Covenant treasure box. And does not this endear the mercy of God to youthat it comes through Jesus Christ? It seems to me to enhance its value and to make every Covenant blessing more and more dear because it is brought to us by the hand of the Well-Beloved! By His Atonement it is procured to us and by His matchless intercession it is actually bestowed!

Said I not right well that I have a theme which is too deep and high for me? I might detain you many a day upon this one word, through Christ Jesus, through the Incarnate God, through His life and death and Resurrection, and His intercession at the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty on high! All things come to us through Christ Jesus! He is the golden pipe of the conduit of eternal love, the window through which Grace shines, the door by which it enters! Get these two or three words and sit down and turn them over and over and over in your soulsand see if there is not the very music of Heaven sleeping within themwhich your faith may call forth and coin into hallelujahs! The exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesusthis is an anthem worthy of the celestial choirs! Sing it, O you chosen of the Lord, while you are waiting to ascend His holy hill!

II. But now I take a step further and get into the soul of the text. Let us considerTHE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE. Here, our English is a poor language as compared with the Greek, and I believe that Paul groaned, even when he was writing the matchless Greek of the text, because he could not make it express all his meaning. Even the Hebrew, which seems to be the most expressive of all human tongues and might well have been spoken in Paradise, cannot contain or set forth the fullness of Gods great thoughtsbut here the Greek is wonderful! What if I read the words, the hyperbolical wealth of Grace, or the super-abounding, excessive, overflowing riches of the Grace of God?

If I were to heap up epithets, I could not give you all that Paul means. Only notice, first, that the riches of the Grace of God are above all limit. A man is not rich when he can count his money, or miss this and that when he has spent it. We used to read in our first Latin books, It is the mark of a poor man to number his flocksthe rich man has so many sheep that he cannot count them. When a person becomes immensely wealthy, he is richer than he needs to be and has not only, enough, but much to spare! So is it with the Grace of GodHe has as much Grace as you needand He has a great deal more than that! The Lord has as much Grace as a whole universe will require, but He has vastly more. He overflows!

All the demands that can ever be made on the Grace of God will never impoverish Him, or even diminish His store of mercy! There will remain an incalculably precious mine of mercy as full as when He first began to bless the sons of men! In a country village, if a man has a few hundred pounds, he is thought to be quite rich. You get into a large townthere a man must have several thousands! But when you come to London and frequent the Stock Exchange, you enquire of so-and-so, Is he a rich man? and someone will, perhaps, reply, Yes, yes. He is worth a hundred thousand pounds. Put that same question to a Rothschild with his millions and he answers, No, he is a little man. He is not rich. He only owns a hundred thousand pounds. These great bankers count their money by millions!

Well, but what are these great Rothschilds with all their millions when they are reckoned up according to the wealth of Heaven? They are nowhere at all! Only the Lord is rich. If I were hungry, He says, I would not tell you, for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof. He says, The silver and the gold are Mine and the cattle on a thousand hills. God is so rich in mercy that you cannot tell how rich He is! His is overflowing riches, marvelous riches, exceeding riches! God is excessive in nothing that I know of except in His mercy. He has boundless in all His attributes, but emphatically so in His lovefor God is Love! His Grace is above all observation. The little Grace which you have seenyou stop me and exclaim, Sir, I have seen great Grace. So you have, for you! But the little Grace you have seen, I say, bears no proportion to the glorious whole!

You have not seen as much of Gods Grace as a man might see of the sea if he stood upon the beach at Brighton or at Hastings. Why, you reply in surprise, I can see as much of the ocean, there, as any mortal man can see. That may be, but mens eyes have but a narrow range! I tell you, you have never beheld the sea, but only a trifling portion of it. If a man crosses from America, he has gazed upon a narrow furrow along which his vessel has plowed its way, but no one has ever beheld to the full, the vast, majestic ocean in all its length, breadth and depth! Nobody can see it in all its far-resounding shores and hollow caves! Such is the exceeding riches of Gods Grace unsearchable, passing knowledge! Oh my poor tongue and my dull language! I must leave my subject, for it overflows my soul and drowns my speech. You must think it out for yourselves. The Grace of God surpasses all you know, all you see and all you think.

So I remark, next, that this Grace is above all expression, yes, even Inspired expression. Paul, though full of the Holy Spirit, could not speak out all the love of God in Christ Jesus, for His love is unspeakable! Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Grace. If we had all the tongues of men and of angels, we could not declare all the riches of the Grace of God! No, if all the orators that ever lived made this their one and only theme and if all of these were under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet human language could not compass this Divine thing

*Words are but air, and tongues but clay,*

*And this compassion is Divine.*   
If we knew the language of angels we could not, then, declare the Grace of God! The most experienced saints bewail the weakness of every form of speech to describe the exceeding riches of the Grace of God.

We are compelled to add that it is above all our ways of action. The Gospel has taught us to forgive, but we do not take to it naturally. If anyone treats us very ill it is with some difficulty that we forgive. And there are certain base, cruel and ungrateful treatments which it becomes almost impossible to overlook and, if we forgive, yet we do not always forget. But such is the greatness of Gods mercy that we who have wearied ourselves with iniquity and wearied Him with our sins, yet have not outworn His compassion. It is hard for us to pardon, but it is spontaneous with God. He delights in itHe delights in mercy. Twenty-six times in one Psalm the sweet singer proclaims that, His mercy endures forever. How he rings that bell again, and again, and againFor His mercy endures forever!

Your mercy is very short and your temper is quick so that you speak unadvisedly and angrily very soonbut it is not so with God. So wondrous are His ways of Grace that they are past finding out! We cannot follow them and can scarcely believe them because they are so unlike ours! His ways are above our ways and His thoughts above our thoughts as much as the heavens are above the earth! The gentlest, meekest and most loving minds are left far behind in this race of love. Man is miserly in forgiveness, but the Lord is rich in mercy. Our little stream of goodness runs after much pumping and pressure, but the river of Divine Love flows freely on.

Yes, and the ways of Grace are above our understanding! Some famous minds have been born into the world, every now and then, men who have explored the sun, threaded the stars, and pried into the heart of the earth and told us of its ancient history. God raises up, every now and then, master minds to perceive and reveal His wisdom in Nature. But there never was and never shall be a human understanding that can fully grasp the incomprehensible riches of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus! Sit down and think it over and look intently into this mysteryand you will find it far beyond you. It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

I have set myself, this day, to study this matter, but I have barely touched it as with a swallows wing! I have not dived into the fathomless depths, nor can I! Jehovah is such a marvelously forgiving God, so rich in His mercy, that our understanding cannot count the mighty sum. Yes, and if our thoughts were raised to the utmostif we were sanctified to the highest degree, if we were so pure in heart as to see Godnot even, then, should we be able to know all the exceeding riches of His Grace to us who believe! The loftiest thought of the most saintly mind never rose to the height of this great argument! The most masterly poetic conception faints, its wing droops and it falls to earth in the presence of this mercy which is higher than the heavens and far above the clouds! I wish I could say something that would make men know how vast is the mercy of God. Oh that these lips had language! Perhaps my failure may be better than fluency. If so, I would gladly be dumb to let Mercy, itself, speak.

Furthermore, dear Friends, the exceeding riches of Gods Grace may be guessed at by the fact that Divine Mercy is above all our sins. You cannot sin so much as God can forgive! If it comes to a pitched battle between sin and Grace, you shall not be so bad as God shall be good. I will prove it to you. You can only sin as a man, but God can forgive as a God! You sin as a finite creature, but the Lord forgives as the infinite Creator. When I received that thought fairly into my soul last night, I felt like Abraham when he laughed for joyI sin like a man, but He forgives like a God! We will never sin that Grace may aboundthat were infamous and detestable!

But what a blessed text is thatWhere sin abounded Grace did much more abound. Your sin is like a mountain, but if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you shall say to this mountain, Be you removed, therefore, and cast into the midst of the sea of Gods infinite mercy, and it shall be done unto you! The atoning blood will wash out all transgression and not a trace of it shall remain. Does not this fact magnify the mercy of God? Gross and intolerable as your sin may be, yet it is but as a drop in a bucket compared with the immense ocean of forgiving love! Try again. Gods mercy is greater than His promises. Oh, no, you say, that will not do! We have read of exceeding great and precious promises. I tell you His mercy has a Glory beyond His promises, for His mercy is the father of His promises!

The Lord had mercy and Grace before He had spoken a single promise and it was because His heart was flaming with love that He made a Covenant of Grace and wrote, therein, the words of peace. His promises are precious streams that come leaping up in the deserts of our lost and ruined state. But the depth that lies under, which Scripture calls, the depth that couches beneath, is richer than the fountain which comes out of it! The mercy of God is the source and the wellhead is greater than the promises which flow from itinfinitely greater than our straitened interpretations of the promiseswhich fall far short of their real meaning! And even that meaning, did we know it, cannot set forth all the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Let us try again. Gods mercy is greater than all that all His children have ever received as yet. His redeemed are a multitude that no man can number and each one draws heavily upon the Divine Bank, but, notwithstanding all the Grace He has ever given to them, (and He has given to each of them a measureless portion), yet there is more Grace in God than He has given forth as yet. Oh, you say, how can that be? It is so because His mercy is not all given out in this lifemuch of it is laid up for enjoyment in the world to come. The Grace which we have not yet tasted is the very crown of the feast! The Lord has prepared, for them that love Him, an inconceivable bliss!

There is Heaven, there is Glory, there is all the bliss of the endless ages yet laid up in store. Oh the wealth of these heavenly reserves! I am sure I stated the Truth of God when I said that what the Lord has given does not comprehend all the exceeding riches of His GraceHe has infinitely more to give. You have seen the river Thames go rolling along, the abounding and rejoicing riverand you see the cattle come, on a hot day, and stand knee deep in the stream, and drink, drink, drink. There is more water in the Thames than all the bullocks in all earths pastures ever drank, or will drink. They may be driven from every prairie under Heaven and stand on the rivers brink and drink as though they would suck up Jordan at a draught, but they will never diminish the wealth of Father Thames!

But even if they could, you and I would be still as far off from all possibility of draining the wondrous flood of mercy which comes flowing forth from beneath the Throne of God! The rain of Grace has filled the pools, but it will rain, again, none the less plentifully. Gods ability to give is greater than our capacity to receive. The fact is that this Grace is above all measure. Yet we have four measures for itheight, depth, breadth, lengthand this mercy of God is so exceedingly great that in each of these measures it baffles description! It is higher than our sin, though that is exceedingly heinous and proudly threatens the gates of Heaven! It is higher than our thoughts, though our imagination, sometimes, takes a condors flight. Oh, the height of Divine Mercy! It rises to the Throne of the Eternal!

As for the depths of Gracethe sea has immense depths, but the mercy of God is altogether unfathomable! Great sins sink into it and are lost, but Grace is just as deep, after it has swallowed up a worlds sin, as it was before. There are inconceivably deep places in Gods mercy where the blackest sins are lost. Out of these come the choicest pearls of Grace. Oh the depths! As for the breadth of mercy, David says, As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. What greater breadth can be conceived? As for the length of it, it is from everlasting to everlasting! Can anybody tell me the length of that? My sins began less than 50 years ago, but the Lords mercy began oh, when did it begin?

It was always with Him and His plans of mercy are from everlasting! There is a beginning to mans sin, but there is no beginning to pardoning Love. I shall cease to sin, I hope, long before another 50 years are over, and I shall be beyond fear of further fault. But the mercy of the Lord will never end, world without end! Who, then, can compass a matter which, in any one of its measurements, far surpasses all human computation? Grace is above all calculation! Hasten here, you great sinners! You are not great as compared with the Lords great mercy in Christ Jesus! We cannot allow you to apply the word, great, to your sinwe need to reserve it for the mercy of God! We must monopolize the word, for all greatness dwells in the love and mercy of our God. However much you may have wandered, however black you may be, however defiled, God delights in mercyit is the joy of His heart to pass by transgression and sin through the precious blood of Christ!

Do not do my Lord so great a dishonor as to measure your sin and affirm that it outstrips His mercy! It cannot be! You know nothing about the glorious Nature of my Lord. A child may fill its little cup out of the great sea, but the sea never misses it. Your sin is like that cup and you may fill it to the brim with mercy, but the ocean of love will never miss all that you can take from it! Come, take all that you can take, and none shall question you! Wash out your crimson stains in this pure flood and it shall remain as pure as at the first! I would not speak lightly of your sinit is an exceedingly great and grievous thingbut still, I do say over, again, that as compared with the infinite mercy of God it is but as a shadow to the sun, or a grain of sand to the full ocean at its flood!

III. These riches of Grace deserve TO BE STILL FURTHER ILLUSTRATED and I shall illustrate them only by hints. What exceeding riches of Grace it was on Gods part that when we resisted Him in the days of our sin He resolved to overcome our folly. If you offer a man a great kindness and he will not have it, you say, Well, then, he must do without it. I am not going down on my knees to him to ask him to receive a favor from me. Yet the Lord pleads with sinners to accept His Grace. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. He begs and beseeches men that they will be saved! He entreats them! He pleads with them! He argues with them that they would turn to Jesus and live! Oh, the exceeding riches of His Grace!

My Master, the Lord Jesus, came along to me and said, Soul, will you have pardon and forgiveness? And fool that I was, I answered, No. Then He came, again, and said, Will you have Me and My salvation? I will take you to Heaven with Me. And I answered, No. Ah, but He would not take, No, for an answer! He had a sweet way of getting at my understanding and my will and He drew me till, at last, I cried after Him! How I ate my black and rebellious words! O Lord, I said, take no notice of what Your poor, poor child has said! Throw my obstinate refusals behind Your back and let me come to You. But, oh, the exceeding riches of His Grace that He should stand waiting, waiting long, and knocking at our door though we would not let Him in!

The exceeding riches of His Grace were seen in making no conditions with us. When the Lord Jesus Christ met with us, He did not stand out for terms. I heard one say the other day, I do not feel enough brokenness of heart nor enough humiliation of spirit. Who said that Christ demanded so much brokenness of heart and so much humbling of spirit before He would give His mercy? He who dared to say it knows not the freeness of the Gospel, for the Gospel comes to bring you the broken heart and the humbled spirit! And Christ comes to you just as you are, in all your alienation and your enmity, and brings everything in His hands that you can need. This is what we call Free Grace! A sharp critic said the other day, Do not say Free Grace, it is a tautologyGrace must be free.

Ah, my dear Sir, but we shall say, Free Grace, so that there shall be no mistake about it, for some, I dare say, will not know where we are unless we are redundant in our expressions upon this point! There was nothing in us to draw Christ to us. We had nothing good, but everything evil. When He came, He did not say, Bankrupt sinner, you must pay two pence on the pound, and I will pay the other nineteen and ten pence. He paid all our debts, asking not a farthing from us! He saw us lying by the roadside, bruised and broken, and He did not say, Come here, poor man; rise up, and I will bind your wounds. No, but He came where we were lying, unable to stir, and poured in the wine and the oiland did it all without our help. This is the exceeding riches of His Gracein not standing stipulating and huckstering with us, but freely giving to us all we need only asking that we would receive it; that we would be empty and that He might fill us with His love.

Beloved, I think I never knew the exceeding riches of His Grace better that when I was thinking, the other day, of how His Grace works. Why, He does all this with a word! He speaks a black sinner white! He speaks a dead sinner into life by a word. Live, He says, and he that was dead lives! He that had been accounted unrighteous is, by Gods will, reckoned righteous and he is righteous, for him whom God reckons to be righteous, by the imputation of Christs righteousness is righteous, indeed! Yes, and he shall be rewarded for that righteousness which God, with a word, gives to him!

If you need another proof of the exceeding riches of His Grace think of the power of the blood. Once washed in the crimson fountain, your every sin is gone, every spot is washed out! Yes, and gone never to return, for he that is once washed in the atoning blood will never be black, again! The cleansing is perfected forever. The glorious High Priest made one offering for sin, only oneHe did it once and by that He annihilated all the sins of all His people at a single strokeonce and for all! Oh, the exceeding riches of His Grace. His word, His blood have worked such wondrous mysteries of Grace. And since then, dear Friends, have not the exceeding riches of Gods Grace been marvelous to you? To think that He should accept us as Believers though we had not more than half a grain of faith! He has even treated us as Believers when sometimes we have been more doubters than trusters.

As for our repentance, it seemed such a poor shallow regret, yet He has reckoned it repentance and accepted it as such. Our love to Him! Oh, our poor love to Him has been like a spark hiding away in the ashes, yet He has called it love! He has known us better than we know ourselves and He has known we loved Him notwithstanding the feebleness of our affection! These poor, frail Graces of ours that we have been ashamed of, He has, nevertheless, rejoiced in them and had a joy in them as being the gift of His Spirit, of the exceeding riches of His Grace. Ever since our conversion, the Lord has held on to us and helped us to hold on to Him. We have sorely tried Him time out of mind.

Sometimes we talk about our trials. There is another side to that. Think of Christs trialshow we have grieved Him! We must have provoked His spirit 10,000 times, yet He loves us infinitely and does not give us up! He has espoused us to Himself and He will never divorce us. He never sued out a divorce against a soul that was married to Him, nor ever will! He has not grown cold in His lovenotwithstanding our chillinessHe loves us, now, with all His great and infinite heart! And, by-and-by, He will open the golden gates and He will say, Come up here

*Then, Lord, shall I fully know, but*

*Not till then, how much I owe.*   
But if, when I get to Heaven, I shall know what I owed Him here, I shall be in a greater difficulty than ever, for I shall not know what I then owe Him in His Glory!

It is an enormous debt we owe Him for the blessings of time and, perhaps, in eternity we shall begin to calculate their value. But then we shall be sweetly oppressed with a new burden, in a sense, of the amazing mercy which He will then be giving us at His right hand. We may give up the endless task! We cannot possibly calculate the sum! Brothers and Sisters, we are all in an equal difficulty and shall be so forever, for the Lord will go on to deluge us with mercy, Grace and favor forever and forever! And we shall say to one another, when millions of years have gone, Brother, is it not still astonishing? Do you seem to know much more of it than you did in the Tabernacle that morning when you heard the poor preacher try to do his best with his subject and he was utterly lost in it? And you will say, I know far more, but I am as far off as ever from knowing all, for now I know more of my ignorance. I know more of the extent of what I do not know.

Brothers and Sisters, if what we do know and what we do not know are added together to make up the total sum of the Lords Grace, what must it be?

*God only knows the love of God: Oh that it now were shed abroad In these poor stony hearts.*

God grant it, for Jesus sake. Amen.   
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1064 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SALVATION ALL OF GRACE   
NO. 1064

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 4, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

By Grace are you saved.   
Ephesians 2:8.

OTHER Divine attributes are manifest in salvation. The Wisdom of God devised the plan. The Omnipotence of God executes in us the work of salvation. The Immutability of God preserves and carries it onin fact, all the attributes of God are magnified in the salvation of a sinnerbut at the same time the text is most accurate since Grace is the fountainhead of salvation and is most conspicuous throughout. Grace is to be seen in our election, for, there is a remnant according to the election of Grace, and if by Grace then it is no more of works.

Grace is manifestly revealed in our redemption, for you know therein the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is utterly inconceivable that any soul could have deserved to be redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The mere thought is abhorrent to every holy mind. Our calling is also of Grace, for, He has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

By Grace also are we justified, for over and over again the Apostle insists upon this grand and fundamental Truth of God. We are not justified before God by works in any measure or in any degree, but by faith alone, and the Apostle tells us, it is of faith, that it might be by Grace. We see a golden thread of Grace running through the whole of the Christians historyfrom his election before all worlds even to his admission to the Heaven of rest. Grace, all along, reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, and, where sin abounds, Grace does much more abound. There is no point in the history of a saved soul upon which you can put your finger and say, In this instance he is saved by his own merit. Every single blessing which we receive from God comes to us by the channel of free favor, revealed to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Boasting is excluded because merits are excluded. Merit is an unknown word in the Christian Churchit is banished once and for alland our only shouts over foundation or top stone are, Grace, Grace unto it!

Perhaps the Apostle is the more earnest in insisting upon this Truth of God here, and in many other places, because this is a point against which the human heart raises the greatest objection. Every man, by nature, fights against salvation by Grace. Though we have nothing good in ourselves, we all think we have! Though we have all broken the Law and have lost all claim upon Divine regard, yet we are all proud enough to fancy that we are not quite so bad as othersthat there are some mitigating circumstances in our offenses and that we can, in some measure, appeal to the justice as well as to the compassion of God.

Hence the Apostle puts it so strongly, By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. The statement of the text means just thisthat we all need savingsaving from our sins and saving from the consequences of them. And that if we are saved it is not because of any works which we have already performed. Who among us, upon looking back at his past life, would dare to say that he deserves salvation?

Neither are we saved on account of any works foreseen which are yet to be performed by us. We have made no bargain with God that we will give Him so much service for so much mercyneither has He made any Covenant with us of this character. He has freely saved us and if we serve Him in the future, as we trust we shall, with all our heart and soul and strengtheven then we shall have no room for glorying because our works are worked in us of the Lord! What have we, then, which we have not received? We are saved not because of any mitigating circumstances with regard to our transgressions, nor because we were excusable on account of our youth, or of our ignorance, or any other cause! We are not saved because there were some good points in our character which ought not to be overlooked, or some hopeful indications of better things in the future!

Ah, noBy Grace are you saved. That clear and unqualified statement sweeps away all supposition of any deserving on our part, or any thought of deserving! It is not a case of a prisoner at the bar who pleads, not guilty, and who escapes because he is innocent. Far from it, for we are guilty beyond all question! It is not even a case of a prisoner who pleads, guilty, but at the same time mentions certain circumstances which render his offense less heinous. Far from it, for our offense is heinous to the last degree and our sin deserves the utmost wrath of God! Ours is the case of a criminal confessing his guilt and owning that he deserves the punishment, offering no extenuation and making no apology, but casting himself upon the absolute mercy of the judge, desiring him, for pitys sake, to look upon his misery and spare him in compassion.

As condemned criminals we stand before God when we come to Him for mercy. We are not in a state of probation, as some sayour probation is overwe are already lost! Condemned already, and our only course is to cast ourselves upon the sovereign mercy of God in Christ Jesus, not uttering a syllable of claim, but simply saying, Mercy, Lord, I crave undeserved mercy according to Your loving kindness and Your Grace in Christ Jesus. By Grace are you saved. This is true of every saint on earth and every saint in Heavenaltogether true without a single sentence of qualification! No man is saved except as the result of the free favor and unbought mercy of God, not of merit, not of debt, but entirely and altogether because the Lord, will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He wills to bestow His favor on the unworthy sons of men.

I. This simple Truth of God we do not mean to work out this morning, doctrinally or controversially, but to use it for practical purposes and the first is thisTHIS GREAT DOCTRINE SHOULD INSPIRE EVERY SINNER WITH HOPE. If salvation is altogether of the free favor and Grace of God, then who among us dares to despair? Who in this place shall be so wicked as to sit down in sullenness and say, It is impossible for me to be saved? For first, my Brothers and Sisters, if salvation is of mercy only, it is clear that our sin is by no means an impediment to our salvation!

If it were of justice, our transgression of the Law would render our salvation utterly impossible. But if the Lord deals with us upon quite another footing, and says, I will forgive them freely, that very promise presupposes sin! If the Lord speaks of mercy, that very word takes it for granted that we are guilty, or else there would be no room for mercy at all! The very statement that we are saved by Grace implies that we are fit objects for Graceand who are fit objects for Grace but the guilty, the wretched, the condemned?!

O Souls of men, the Law stops your mouths and makes you silently admit that you are guilty before God! But the Gospel opens the mouth of the dumb by declaring, Christ died for the ungodly, and, He came into the world to save sinners. If mercy comes into the field, sin is swallowed up in forgiveness, and unworthiness ceases to be a barrier for love! Is not this both clear and comforting?

Now observe that this prevents the despair which might arise in any heart on account of some one special sin. I meet with many whose terror of conscience arises from one particular crime. Had they not committed that crimson sin they consider that they might have been pardoned, but now they are in an evil case. Surely, they say, that sin, like an iron bolt, has fast closed the gates of Heaven against me. And yet it cannot be so if salvation is of Grace! Whatever the sin may be, its greatness will only serve to illustrate the great Grace of God. Undeserved mercy can pardon one sin as well as another if the soul confesses it. If God acted on the rule of merit with us, then no sin would be pardonable under any circumstances! But when He deals with us in a way of Grace He can pass by any offense for which we seek forgiveness.

The great sinner is so much the fitter object for great mercy. He who has but little sin, can, as it were, but draw forth little mercy from God to blot it out. But he who is guilty of some great, crowning, damning sinhe it is to whom the heights and depths of Divine mercy may be displayed! And if I speak to such an one this morning I would look upon him with joyful eyes. Sorrowful as he is, I am thankful to have found out such an one. You are a rare platform on which my Lords love may display itself because you know yourself to be so utterly a lost sinner! You are but a black foil to set forth the brilliant diamond of my Masters Grace! Your foulness shall but illustrate the virtue of His precious blood and your crimson sin, by yielding in a moment to the precious blood, shall only show how great is His power to save!

It is clear, too, that if the sinners despair should arise from the long continuance, multitude and great aggravation of his sins, there is no ground for it. For if salvation is of pure mercy only, why should not God forgive 10,000 sins as well as one? Oh, you say, I see why He should not. Then you see more than is true, for once come to Grace you have done with bounds and limits!

Know, moreover, that, His thoughts are not your thoughts. And as the heavens are higher than the earth so are His thoughts higher than your thoughts and His ways than your ways. To blot out 10,000 sins is, with Him, no effort of Grace, for, He is plenteous in mercy. He has been forgiving the sons of men ever since the first sinner crossed the threshold of Paradise and He delights to do it! So that, guilty Ones, I see in the multitude of your sins only so much the more room for the Lord to exercise His own delightful attribute of mercy! If He delights to blot out one sin, then He delights 10,000 times more to blot out 10,000 sins! If you will look at it in that light, though your transgressions may be as many as the hairs on your head or as the sands on the sea shore, you need not for a moment think you are cast away from hope!

The Lords mercy is a sea which cannot be filled though mountains of sin are cast into its midst! It is like Noahs flood which covers all and drowns even the mountaintops of Heaven-defying sins! I wish to speak right home to the hearts of those who are in trouble and seeking mercy, and to them I saydo you not see that if salvation is of Grace alone, then the depravity of your nature does not shut you up in despair? What? Though your Nature is inclined to sin, and especially inclined to some sinswhat if you are naturally angry and passionate? What if you are proud and covetous? What if you are in your natural disposition skeptical or lustful? Yet from the Grace of God hope flows even for you!

If the Lord were to deal with you according to your constitution and Nature, then, indeed, it were a hopeless case with you. But if He blesses you, not because you are good but because you need to be blessed. If He looks upon you in mercy, not because you are beautiful but because you are sick unto death and defiled, and need to be healed and cleansed. If it is your misery and not your merit which He considers, then you are yet in the land of hope! However fallen you may be, you may yet be raised up!

Why should not the Lord take the most depraved and abandoned, and obstinate among us, and renew his Nature and make of him a miracle of Grace? Would it not magnify His mercy if He should make of such an one the opposite of what he now is? What if He should make him tender in heart, holy in spirit, devout in character, ardent in love and fervent in prayer? He can do it! Glory be to His name, He can do it! And now that He deals with us in Grace let us hope He will do it in the case of many here today.

Remember, too, that any spiritual unfitness which may exist in a man should not shut him out from a hope since God deals with us in mercy. I hear you say, I believe God can save me, but I am so impenitent. Yes, and I say it again, if you were to stand on terms of debt with God, your hard heart would shut you out of hope. How could He bless such a wretch as you are, whose heart is a heart of stone? But if He deals with you entirely upon another ground, namely, His mercy, why I think I hear Him say, Poor hard-hearted Sinner, I will pity you and take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh.

Do you say, I cannot repent? I know the criminality of that sad fact. It is a great sin not to be able to repent, but then the Lord will not look upon you from the point of what you ought to be, but He will consider what He can make you, and He will give you repentance! Has not His Son gone up to Heaven, exalted on high, to give repentance and remission of sins? Do I hear you confess that you cannot believe? Now, the absence of faith from you is a great evil, yes, a horrible evil. But then the Lord is dealing with you on terms of Grace and does not say, I will not strike you because you do not believe, but He says, I will give you faith, for faith is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. He works our faith in us and has pity upon us, and takes away the unbelieving heart and gives the tender heart, the believing heart, in the presence of the Cross of Christ!

Oh, though I were black as the devil with past sin and vile as the devil with innate depravity, yet, if the Lords mercy looked upon me, could He not forgive the past and chance my Nature, and make me as bright a seraph as Gabriel before His Throne? Is anything too hard for the Lord? O Sinner, what a door of hope there ought to be open to you in this Truth of Godthat salvation is altogether of Grace! And now, to sum up all in a word, there is no supposable circumstance or incident, or anything connected with any man that can shut him out of hope if he seeks forgiveness through the Saviors blood! Whoever you may be and whatever you may have done, Grace can come and save you! I say again, if your character is the question at issue, you are a lost man! If your power to amend your character is the hinge of the business, you are a lost man!

But if the Grace that pardons and the power that amends both come from God, why should you be a lost man? Why should the harlot perish? Why should the thief perish? Why should the adulterer perish? Why should the murderer perish? Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. You have heaped up your sins but God will heap up His mercies! You have highly aggravated your transgressionsyou have sinned against light and knowledgeyou have done evil with both hands greedily! But, thus says the Lord, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Thus much upon the first statement, that this doctrine ought to give hope to the sinner.   
II. Secondly, THIS DOCTRINE AFFORDS DIRECTION TO THE SINNER as to how to act before his God in seeking mercy. Clearly, O Soul, if salvation is of Grace alone, it would be a very wrong course of action to plead that you are not guilty, or to extenuate your faults before Godthat were to go upon the wrong tack altogether. If salvation is by your merit, or by an absence of demerit, then you would be right enough to set up a good character as a plea, though I believe that in the trial you would break down mightily, for you are as full of sin as an egg is of meat and your sin is as damnable as Hell itself!

And therefore it were vain for you to plead innocencebut if you could plead it, it is the wrong plea. If salvation is of Grace, then go to the Lord and confess your sin and transgression, and ask for Grace. Do not, for a moment, attempt to show that you have no need of Grace, for that were folly, indeed! What more foolish than for a beggar to plead that he is not in need? Do not shut the door of Grace in your own face! To say, I am not guilty, is to say I do not need mercy. To say, I have not transgressed, is to say, I do not need to be forgiven, and how better could you commit spiritual suicide than by such pleading?   
Neither, O Sinner, hope to propitiate the Lord with gifts and sacrifices. If salvation is of Grace, how dare you think to buy it? If He says He gives it freely, bring not with you any bribe, for in so doing you will insult and anger Him. Indeed, what could you bring to Him when Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt sacrifice? If you could give Him rivers of oil that should deluge a continent, or seas of sacrificial blood broad as the Pacific, yet could you not for a moment render yourself acceptable with Him! Therefore do not try it! Venture on no ceremonies. Rest not in rituals. If salvation is of Grace, accept it as a free gift and bless the Giver. Do not think to dress yourself in garments of outward religiousness, or to borrow virtue from a fellow man who claims to be a priest! But since salvation is of free mercy, go and cast yourself on that free mercy!   
That is to act according to the dictates of prudence. Your true course is thissince God is willing to show His mercygo and confess that you need that mercy. Aggravate your sin in the confession if you can. Instead of trying to make it appear white, try to see its unutterable blackness. Say that you are without excuse, justly condemned for your transgressions. I assure you you shall never go beyond the truth in stating your sin, for that were quite impossible. A man lying wounded on the field of battle when the surgeon comes round, or the soldiers with the ambulancedoes not say, Oh, mine is a little wound, for he knows that then they would let him lie. But he cries out, I have been bleeding here for hours, and am nearly dead with a terrible wound, for he thinks that then he will gain speedier relief. And when he gets into the hospital he does not say to the nurse, Mine is a small affair. I shall soon get over it. But he tells the truth to the surgeon in the hope that he may set the bone at once and that double care may be taken.   
Ah, Sinner, you must do the same with God! The right way to plead is to plead your misery, your impotence, your danger, your sin. Lay bare your wounds before the Lord and as Hezekiah spread Sennacheribs letter before the Lord, spread your sins before Him with many a tear and many a cry, and say, Lord, save me from all these! Save me from these black and foul things for Your infinite mercys sake. Confess your sin! Wisdom dictates that you should do so, since salvation is of Grace.  
And then yield yourself up to God. Capitulate at discretion. Make no terms with Him, but say, Here I stand before You, O my Maker. I have offended You. I yield to You because You have said You will deal with me on terms of Grace. Behold, I cast myself at Your feet. The weapons of my rebellion I cast from my hands forever. I desire that You would take me and make me what You would have me to be. And seeing You are a God of Grace, I beseech You to have pity upon me. You have appointed a way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Oh, save me in that way, I entreat You.   
Now, mark, I need to dwell upon this next pointbecause salvation is of Grace it directs the guilty as to how to plead before God. When we are praying and pleading we sometimes feel we need a help to guide us in the pleading. Let this guide you. Take care that all your pleas with God are consistent with the fact that He saves by His Grace. Never bring a legal plea, or a plea that is based upon self, for it will be an offense to God. Whereas, if your argument is based on Grace, it will have a sweet savor to Him.   
Let me teach you, seeking Sinner, for a moment how to pray. Let it be in this way. Plead with God your miserable and undone condition. Tell Him you are utterly lost if He does not save you. Tell Him you are already lost, so that you can not help yourself hand or foot in this matter if He does not come to your rescue with the fullness of His power and love. Tell him that you are afraid to die and to come before His righteous bar, for unless He saves you Hell will be your portion. Plead with Him and ask Him whether it will delight Him that you should make your bed in Hell. Say to Him, Shall the dead praise You? Shall the condemned set forth the praise? Show Him the imminence of your danger. He knows it, but let Him see that you know it, and this will be good pleading with His mercy. Save me, O Lord, for if ever a soul needed saving, if ever a soul were in the jaws of destruction, I am that soul! Therefore have pity upon me. Thus pour out your heart before Him.   
Then humbly urge the suitableness of His mercy to you. Lord, You are merciful. Your mercy will find ample scope in me. Does your Grace seek out sin to purge it away? It is here, LordI teem with itmy heart swarms with evils! If You are pitiful, here is a heart which bleeds and is ready to perish. Oh, if You are, indeed, a physician, here is a sick soul that needs you! If You are ready to forgive, here are sins that need forgiving. Come to me, Lord, for Your mercy will find a grievousness of misery in me! Besides, is not Your mercy free? It is true I do not deserve it, but You do not give it to men because of their merit, else were it not Grace and mercy at all. Let Your free mercy light on me! Why should You pass me by? If I am the vilest of the sons of men You will be the more gracious if You look upon me. What? Though I have forgotten You these many years and have even despised Your love, will it not be the greater mercy on Your part to turn and give Your free Grace to me, even to me?   
Then argue with Him the plenteousness of His Grace. Say to Him, Lord, Your mercy is very great, I know it is. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. If You were a little God and You had but little mercy, I should have but little hope in You, but oh, You are so great and glorious! You can cast my transgressions behind Your back! By the greatness of Your compassion, then, look on me. It is well, also, to return to the first plea and repeat it, saying, Lord, because You have this greet mercy and I need it, look on my impotence this day. I am so weak I cannot come to You unless You come to me. You bid me repent, but see how hard my heart is! You command me to believe in Jesus, but my unbelief is very strong! You tell me to look to Your dear Son upon the Cross, but I cannot see Him for my tears which blind these weary eyes.   
Master, come to the rescue! Come and help Your servant for You are strong, though I am weak. You can break my heart though I cannot break it and You can open my poor bleared eyes, though I cannot as yet see as I would see the Savior Jesus Christ. Oh, by Your power and mercy save a weak, dead sinner. And then, if you feel as if you wanted some other plea, begin to plead His promises. Say   
*You have promised to forgive   
All who on Your Son believe.   
Lord, I know You cannot lie!   
Give me Christ or else I die.*   
You have said that if the wicked forsake his way and turn unto You he shall live. Lord, I turn to You. Receive me. You have said that all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. You have declared that the blood of Jesus Christ Your Son cleanses from all sin. Go not back from Your word, O God! Since You are dealing with men on terms of Grace, keep Your promise and let Your rich, free mercy come to me.   
I know what all this means by experience. I have gone over all these pleas by the week together and pleaded with God that He would have mercy upon me. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his fears. Therefore, I bear testimony unto you, O seeking Souls, that this is the way to move His heart. Go upon the plan of Grace and plead His love. Not your merits, but your demerits! Not your profession of what you hope to do, but your acknowledgment of your misery will have power with Him. I have found it sweet work, sometimes, to plead with God His mercy in the gifts of Christ.   
Let me help you, Sinner, to do it and may the Spirit help you. Say you unto God thus, Lord, You have given Your only begotten Son to die. Surely He need not have died for the righteous. He died for the guiltyI am such an oneLord, will You give Your Son for sinners and then cast sinners away? Did You nail Him to the Cross only for a mockery, that we might come to that Cross and not find pity? O God of Mercy, in the gift of Your Son You have done so much that You cannot draw back! You must save sinners now that You have given Jesus to die for them.   
Then plead with Jesus the compassion of His heart. Tell Him that He said He would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Pluck Him by the sleeve, and say, You have said, Him that comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out. Tell Him that it was written of Him, This Man receives sinners and eats with them. Tell Him that you have heard, this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and say to Him, Have You lost your compassion, Savior? Will You not dart a glance of love on me, even me? You did heal lepersheal my leprosy! You did permit the woman, whom You did call a dog, to come and receive blessings at Your hands, and although I AM a dog, yet give the crumbs of Your mercy to me, even me.   
This is the style of plea that will win the day. And then I would advise you, if you still fail in prayer, to go to God and say to Him, Lord, You have sworn with an oathAs I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he would turn to Me and live. I know that you mean this, my God. Will You take pleasure, then, in my death and spurn me now that I turn to You? Tell Him that He has saved other sinners like yourself. Remind Him of your wife, or child, or friend. Tell Him of Saul of Tarsus. Tell Him of the woman that was a sinner. Tell Him of Rahab, and say unto Him, Lord, do You not delight to save great, big, evil sinners? I am just such an one! You have not changed. By all that You have done for others, I pray You do the same for me.

And then say to Him again, I thank You, O God, that You have permitted even me to pray to You. I bless Your Grace that You have moved me to come to You. And as You have given me Grace to feel my sin in a measure, will You leave me to perish after all? Oh, by the Grace I have received in being spared so long in being permitted to hear Your Gospel, I beseech You to give me more Grace.   
Then throw yourself down before Him and if you perish, perish there. Go to the Cross with such pleas as these and resolve that if it can be that a sinner may die at the foot of the Cross, you will die there, but nowhere else. As the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, there shall never a soul perish that can cast itself upon the sovereign Grace of God through Jesus Christ His Son!   
III. Now, to turn away from that to a third point. A FULL CONVICTION OF THIS TRUTH WILL RECONCILE OUR HEARTS TO ALL DIVINE ORDINANCES WITH REGARD TO SALVATION. I feel in my own heart, and I think every Believer here does, that if salvation is of Grace, God must do as He wills with His own. None of us can say to Him, What are You doing? If there were anything of debt, or justice, or obligation in the matter, then we might begin to question Godbut as there is none and the thing is quite out of court as to law and far away from rights and claimsas it is all Gods free favor, we will, therefore, stop our mouths and never question Him.   
As to the persons whom He chooses to save, let Him save whom He wills. His name shall be had in honor forever, let His choice be what it may. As to the instrument by whom He saves, let Him save by the coarsest speaker, or by the most eloquentlet Him do what seems good to Him. If He will save by the Bible, without ministers, we will be glad to hold our tongues. And if He will save souls by one of our Brothers and not by us, we will grieve to think that we are so little fitted for His service, but still, if after doing all we can, He uses another more than us, we will say, Blessed be His name. We will not envy our Brothers. The Lord shall distribute His Grace by what hands He pleases. Send, Lord, by whomever You will send.   
And here I come to the sinner againwith the two great Gospel commands we will raise no dispute. Has He said, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved? We will never raise a question against either the believing or the Baptism. If the Lord chooses to say, I will save those who trust in Christ, it is both so natural a thing that He should claim our faith and so gracious a thing that He should give us the faith He claims of us that we cannot question it! And even if it were not so, He has a right to make what rules He pleases. If God permits entrance only by one door, let us enter by it and raise no contention. The Lord bids you trust in Jesus say not in your heart, I would rather do or feel some wonderful matter.   
If He had bid you do some great thing would you not have done it? How much rather, now, that He says to you, simply trust in Jesus and be saved? I know if I were authorized to preach this morning that every man who would sail round the world should be saved, you would begin saving your money to make the great excursion! But when the Gospel comes to you there in those very pews and aisles and bids you now turn your eyes to the crucified Savior and only look to Him, I know if you have not learned the Truth of God, that salvation is of Grace, you will kick at that Divine command! But if you know it is of Grace, and only Grace, you will say, Sweet is the command of God! Lord, enable me, now, to trust myself with Your dear Son.   
And then you will not quarrel with the ordinance of Baptism, either. I know it is very natural that you should say, What is there in it? I also would say, what is there in it? What can there be in a mere washing in water? If you thought there were any salvation by it meritoriously, you would have missed the track altogether. But the Lord has put it, that he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved, and therefore you must obey! I do not attempt to justify my Lord for so commanding, for He needs no defense from me. But if He so chooses to put it, the true heart will yield a prompt obedience to His will. If it were of merit, I could see no merit in Baptism or in the believing, for surely it cannot be meritorious to believe what is true, or to have ones body washed with pure water. But salvation is of Graceand if the Lord chooses to put it so, let Him put it as He wills.   
I am such a sinner, I will take His mercy, let Him present it in what way He pleases. As to the manner in which the Lord may be pleased to reveal Himself to any one of us, I am sure that if we know that salvation is of Grace, we shall never quarrel about that any more. To some of us, the Lord revealed Himself on a sudden. We know when we were converted to the day. I know the place to a yard. But many others do not. The day breaks on them graduallyfirst twilight, then a brighter lightand afterwards comes the noon. Do not let us quarrel about that. So long as I get a Savior, I do not mind how I get Him! So long as He blots out my sins I will not quibble about the way in which He manifests His love to me. If it is of Grace, that silences everythingJew and Gentile shut their mouths without a murmuring wordand all together sit down at the foot of the Cross, no more to question, but reverently to adore.   
IV. I pass over this point rapidly, for time flies. I gladly would clip his wings. But I must introduce to you the next factthat the doctrine that salvation is of Grace furnishes to those who receive it A MOST POWERFUL MOTIVE FOR FUTURE HOLINESS. A man who feels that he is saved by Grace says, Did God of His free favor blot out my sins? Then, oh, how I love Him! Was it nothing but His love that saved an undeserving wretch? Then my soul is knit to Him forever.   
Great sin becomes in such a case no barrier to great holiness, but rather a motive for it, for he who has had much forgiven loves much, and loving much he begins at once to be in earnest in the service of Him whom he loves. I put it to you, Sinner, if the Lord this morning were to appear to you and say, All your sins have been blotted out, would you not love Him? Yes, I think a dog would love such a Master as that! Would you not love Him? Yes, I know you would! I know you proud, self-righteous people would notbut you real sinners, if pardon were to come to you would you not love God with all your hearts? Assuredly you would, and then your soul would begin to burn with a desire to honor Him!   
You would need to tell the next person you metThe Lord has had mercy upon me! Wonder of wonders, He has had mercy upon me! And then you would desire to put away everything that would displease Him. Away, you Sins! Away, you Sinshow can I defile myself with you again? And then you would desire to practice all His will, and say, For the love I bear His name no duty shall be too difficult, no command too severe. There are none that love God like those who are saved by Grace!   
The man who thinks to save himself by works does not love God at all he loves himselfhe is a servant working for wages and that is the kind of servant who would turn to another master tomorrow if he could get better paid. And if the wages do not suit him he will strike. The old-fashioned servants were the best servants in the world, for they loved their masters and if paid no wages at all would have stuck to the family for loves sake. Such are the servants of God who are saved by His Grace. Why, they say, He has already pardoned me and saved me, and therefore my ear is bored and fastened to the door of His house to be His servant forever. And my glory is, I am Your servant, I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid, You have loosed my bonds.   
Such a man feels that he must perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. He will not stop short with a measure of Gracehe wants immeasurable Grace! He will not say, There are some sins in me which I cannot overcome, but by Gods Grace he will seek to drive out all the Amalekites. He will not say, Up to this point I am commanded to go, but beyond that I have a license to say, That is my besetting sinI cannot get rid of it. No, but loving God with all his heart he will hate sin with all his heart and war with sin with all his might, and will never put sword in scabbard till he is perfected in the image of Christ.   
The Lord fires us with such ardent love as this and I know no way by which to get it except by coming to Him on terms of Grace, confessing sin, receiving mercy, feeling love kindled in the heart in consequence, and thus the whole soul becomes consecrated to the Lord.   
V. Lastly, I wish I could handle my text as I desire and as it handles me, but the truth of my text will be A TEST FOR THIS CONGREGATION. The way you treat this text shall well reveal what you are. It will be either a stone of stumbling to you this morning, or else a foundation stone on which you build. Is it a stone of stumbling? Did I hear you murmur, Why, the man does not hold up morality and good works! He preaches salvation for the guilty and the vile! I do not need such a religion?   
Alas, you have stumbled at this stumbling stone and shall be broken upon it. You shall perish, for you do insult your God by thinking yourself wiser than His Word and by fancying that your righteousness is purer than the righteousness of Christ! You do imagine you can force your way to Heaven by a road that is most effectually blocked up! You despise the path which the Lord has opened! Beware of self-righteousness! The black devil of licentiousness destroys his hundreds, but the white devil of selfrighteousness destroys his thousands!   
But do you accept this text as a foundation stone? Do you say, I need Grace, indeed, for I am guilty? Then come and take all the blessings of the Covenant, for they are yours! He has put down the mighty from their seat and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty. Are you guilty? Come and trust your Savior! Are you empty? Come and be filled out of the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus! Believe in Jesus now, for one act of faith sets you free from all sin! Do not tarry for a moment, nor raise questions with your God. Believe Him capable of infinite mercy and through Jesus Christ rest in Him.

If you are the worst soul in the world in your own apprehension, and the one odd man that would be left out of every catalogue of Grace, now write not such things against yourselfor even if you do, come and cast yourself upon your God! He cannot reject you or if He should, you would be the first that ever trusted in Him and was refused! Come and try! Oh, that His Spirit may bring you to Jesus at this very moment and that in Heaven there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God because a soul has confided in the Grace of God and found immediate pardon and instantaneous salvation through the precious blood of Christ!   
The Lord bless every one of you. Oh, how I would like that every soul here should be washed in the blood of Christ this morning! Would God that every one of you were robed in the righteousness of Christ this day and prepared to enter into His rest! Pray for it, Christian Brothers and Sisters! Why should we not have it? Why, this congregation, great as it may seem, comparatively, is very little to God! Why should there be one left out? Let your prayers encircle the whole house and bear the entire audience up to God! Lay it before Him and say, By Your mercy and by Your loving kindness save all this gathered company, for Christs sake. Amen.

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FAITHWHAT IS IT? HOW CAN IT BE OBTAINED?   
NO. 1609

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 17, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

By Grace are you saved through faith.   
Ephesians 2:8.

I MEAN to dwell mainly upon that expression, Through faith. I call attention, however, first of all, to the fountainhead of our salvation, which is the Grace of God. By Grace are you saved. Because God is gracious, therefore sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified and saved. It is not because of anything in them, or that ever can be in them, that they are saved, but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy and Grace of God. Tarry a moment, then, at the wellhead. Behold the pure river of Water of Life as it proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. What an abyss is the Grace of God! Who can fathom it? Like all the rest of the Divine attributes, it is infinite! God is full of love, for God is love. God is full of goodnessthe very name, God, is but short for, good.

Unbounded goodness and love enter into the very essence of the Godhead. It is because, His mercy endures forever, that men are not destroyed. It is because, His compassions fail not, that sinners are brought to Himself and forgiven. Right well remember this, for otherwise you may fall into error by fixing your minds so much upon the faith which is the channel of salvation as to forget the Grace which is the fountain and source of faith itself! Faith is the work of Gods Grace in us. No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit. No man comes unto Me, says Christ, except the Father which has sent Me draw him. So that faith, which is coming to Christ, is the result of Divine drawing!

Grace is the first and last moving cause of salvation and faith, important as it is, is only an important part of the machinery which Grace employs. We are saved through faith, but it is by Grace. Sound forth those words as with the archangels trumpetBy Grace are you saved! Faith occupies the position of a channel or conduit. Grace is the fountain and the streamfaith is the aqueduct along which the flood of mercy flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men. It is a great pity when the aqueduct is broken. It is a sad sight to see, around Rome, the many noble aqueducts which no longer convey water into the city because the arches are broken and the marvelous structures are in ruins.

The aqueduct must be kept in tact to convey the current and, even so, faith must be true and sound, leading right up to God and coming right down to ourselves, that it may become a serviceable channel of mercy to our souls. Still, I again remind you that faith is the channel or aqueduct and not the fountainhead. We must not look so much to faith as to exalt it above the Divine source of all blessings which lie in the Grace of God. Never make a Christ out of your faith, nor think of it as if it were the independent source of your salvation. Our life is found in looking unto Jesus, not in looking to our own faith. By faith all things become possible to us, yet the power is not in the faith, but in the God upon whom faith relies.

Grace is the locomotive and faith is the chain by which the carriage of the soul is attached to the great motive power. The righteousness of faith is not the moral excellence of faith, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ which faith grasps and appropriates. The peace within the soul is not derived from the contemplation of our own faithit comes to us from Him who is our peace, the hem of whose garment faith touchesand virtue comes out of Him into the soul. However, it is a very important thing that we look well to the channel and, therefore, at this time we will consider it, as God, the Holy Spirit, shall enable us. Faith. What is it? Faith. Why is it selected as the channel of blessing? Faith. How can it be obtained and increased?

I. FAITH, WHAT IS IT? What is this faith concerning which it is said, By Grace are you saved through faith? There are many descriptions of faith, but almost all the definitions I have met with have made me understand it less than I did before I saw them! The Negro said, when he read the chapter, that he would confound it, and it is very likely that he did so, though he meant to expound it. So, Brethren, we may explain faith till nobody understands it. I hope I shall not be guilty of that fault. Faith is the simplest of all things and, perhaps, because of its simplicity it is the more difficult to explain.

What is faith? It is made up of three thingsknowledge, belief and trust. Knowledge comes first. Romanist divines hold that a man can believe what he does not know. Perhaps a Romanist can, but I cannot. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? I need to be informed of a fact before I can possibly believe it. I believe this, I believe thatbut I cannot say that I believe a great many things of which I have never heard. Faith comes by hearing. We must first hear in order that we may know what is to be believed. They that know Your name will put their trust in You (Psa. 9:10). A measure of knowledge is essential to faith and, therefore, the importance of getting knowledge. Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall livesuch was the word of the ancient Prophet, and it is still the Word of the Gospel!

Search the Scriptures and learn what the Holy Spirit teaches concerning Christ and His salvation. Seek to know Godthat God is and is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. May He give you the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Know the Gospel! Know what the Good News is, how it talks of free forgiveness, of change of heart, of adoption into the family of God and of countless other blessings. Know God, know His Gospel and know, especially, Christ Jesus the Son of God, the Savior of men, united to us by His human Nature and united to God, seeing He is Divine and thus able to act as Mediator between God and man, able to lay His hands upon both and to be the connecting link between the sinner and the Judge of all the earth!   
Endeavor to know more and more of Christ. After Paul had been converted more than 20 years, he tells the Philippians that he desired to know Christ and, depend upon it, the more we know of Jesus, the more we shall wish to know of Him, so that our faith in Him may increase. Endeavor, especially, to know the doctrine of the Sacrifice of Christ, for that is the center of the target at which faith aims! That is the point upon which saving faith mainly fixes itself, that, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Know that He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. Drink deep into the doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ, for therein lies the sweetest possible comfort to the guilty sons of men since the Lord, made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Faith begins with knowledge, therefore the value of being taught in Divine Truth, for to know Christ is eternal life.

Then the mind goes on to believe that these things are true. The soul believes that God is and that He hears the cries of sincere hearts; that the Gospel is from God; that justification by faith is the grand Truth that God has revealed in these last days by His Spirit more clearly than before. Then the heart believes that Jesus is, verily and in truth, our God and Savior, the Redeemer of men, the Prophet, Priest and King unto His people. Dear Hearers, I pray that you may at once come to the understanding of this. Get firmly to believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son, cleans us from all sin, that His Sacrifice is complete and fully accepted of God on mans behalf so that He that believes on Jesus is not condemned.

So far you have made an advance towards faith and one more ingredient is needed to complete it, which is trust. Commit yourself to the merciful God; rest your hope on the gracious Gospel; trust your soul on the dying and living Savior; wash away your sins in the atoning blood; accept His perfect righteousness and all is well! Trust is the lifeblood of faith there is no saving faith without it! The Puritans were accustomed to explain faith by the word, recumbency. You know what it means. You see me leaning upon this rail, leaning with all my weight upon iteven thus, lean upon Christ! It would be a better illustration, still, if I were to stretch myself at full length and rest my whole person upon a rock, lying flat upon it. Fall flat upon Christ! Cast yourself upon Him, rest in Him, commit yourself to Him! That done, you have exercised saving faith.

Faith is not a blind thing, for faith begins with knowledge. It is not a speculative thing, for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an unpractical, dreamy thing, for faith trusts and stakes its destiny upon the truth of Revelation. Faith ventures its all upon the Truth of God. It is not a pleasant word to use, but the poet employed it, and it suggests my meaning

*Venture on Him, venture wholly.*

*Let no other trust intrude.*   
That is one way of describing what faith isI wonder whether I have confounded it already. Let me try again. Faith is believing that Christ is what He is said to be, that He will do what He has promised to do and expecting this of Him. The Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ as being God, God in human fleshas being perfect in His Character; as being made a Sin Offering on our behalfas bearing sin in His own body on the tree. The Scripture speaks of Him as having finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness.

The Scriptures further tell us that He rose again, that He ever lives to make intercession for us, that He has gone up into Glory and has taken possession of Heaven on the behalf of His people and that He will shortly come again to judge the world in righteousness and His people with equity. We are most firmly to believe that it is even so, for this is the testimony of God the Father when He said, This is My beloved Son; hear Him. This also is testified by God the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit has borne witness to Christ, both by the Word and many miracles and by His working in the hearts of men. We are to believe this testimony to be true. Faith also believes that Christ will do what He has promisedthat if He has promised to cast out none that come to Him, it is certain that He will not cast us out if we come to Him.

Faith believes that if Jesus said, The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, it must be true, and if we get this Living Water from Christ, it will abide in us and will well up within us in streams of holy life. Whatever Christ has promised to do, He will do, and we must believe this so as to look for pardon, justification, preservation and eternal glory from His hands according as He has promised.

Then comes the next necessary step. Jesus is what He is said to be. Jesus will do what He says He will do. Therefore we must, each one, trust Him, saying, He will be to me what He says He is and He will do to me what He has promised to do. I leave myself in the hands of Him who is appointed to save, that He may save me. I rest upon His promise that He will do even as He has said. This is a saving faith and he that has it, has everlasting life! Whatever his dangers and difficulties; whatever his darkness and depression; whatever his infirmities and sins, he that believes thus on Christ Jesus is not condemned and shall never come into condemnation. May that explanation be of some service. I trust it may be used by the Spirit of God.

But now I think, as it is a very hot and heavy morning, that I had better give you a number of illustrations, lest anybody should be inclined to go to sleep. If anybody should be drowsy, will his neighbor just nudge him a little, for it may be well, while we are here, to be awakeespecially with such a subject on hand as this! The illustrations will be such as have been commonly used and perhaps I may be able to give one or two of my own. Faith exists in various degrees, according to the amount of knowledge, or other cause. Sometimes faith is little more than a simple clinging to Christa sense of dependence and a willingness to depend.

When you are down at the seaside, as we might, all of us, wish to be, you will see the limpet sticking to the rocks. You walk with a soft tread up to the rock with your walking stick and strike the limpet with a rapid blow and off he comes! Try the next limpet in that way. You have given him warninghe heard the blow with which you struck his neighbor and he clings with all his might. You will never get him off, not you! Strike and strike again, but you may as soon break the rock. Our little friend, the limpet, does not know much, but he clings. He cannot tell us much about what he is clinging tohe is not acquainted with the geological formation of the rockbut he clings! He has found something to cling tothat is his little bit of knowledgeand he uses it by clinging to the rock of his salvation! It is the limpets life to cling!

Thousands of Gods people have no more faith than this. They know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and souland this suffices. Jesus Christ is, to them, a Savior strong and mighty and like a rock, immovable and immutable! They cleave to Him for dear life and this clinging saves them! God gives to His people the propensity to cling. Look at the sweet pea which grows in your garden. Perhaps it has fallen down upon the gravel walk. Lift it up against the laurel or the trellis, or put a stick near it and it catches hold directly, because there are little hooks ready prepared with which it grasps anything which comes in its wayit was meant to grow upwardsand so it is provided with tendrils. Every child of God has his tendrils about himthoughts, desires and hopes with which he hooks on to Christ and the promise.

Though this is a very simple sort of faith, it is a very complete and effectual form of it and, in fact, it is the heart of all faith and that to which we are often driven when we are in deep trouble, or when our mind is somewhat befuddled by our being sickly or depressed in spirit. We can cling when we can do nothing else and that is the very soul of faith! O poor Heart, if you do not yet know as much about the Gospel as we wish you to know, cling to what you do know! If as yet you are only like a lamb that wades a little into the River of Life, and not like leviathan who stirs the mighty deep to the bottom, yet drink, for it is drinkingnot diving that will save you! Cling, then! Cling to Jesus, for that is faith.

Another form of faith is when a man depends upon another from a knowledge of the superiority of that other and follows him. I do not think the limpet knows much about the rock, but in this next phase of faith there is more knowledge. A blind man trusts himself with his guide because he knows that his friend can see and, trusting him, he walks where his guide conducts him. If the poor man is born blind, he does not know what sight is, but he knows that there is such a thing as sight and that it is possessed by his friend and, therefore, he freely puts his hand into the hand of the seeing one and follows his leadership. This is as good an image of faith as we can havewe know that Jesus has about Him merit, power and blessing which we do not possess and, therefore, we gladly trust ourselves to Him and He never betrays our confidence.

Every boy that goes to school has to exert faith while learning. His schoolmaster teaches him geography and instructs him as to the form of the earth and the existence of certain great cities and empires. The boy does not, himself, know that these things are true except that he believes his teacher and the books put into his hands. That is what you will have to do with Christ if you are to be savedyou must know just because He tells you and believe because He assures you it is soand trust yourself with Him because He promises you that salvation will be the result. Almost all that you and I know has come to us by faith. A scientific discovery has been made and we are sure of it. On what ground do we believe it? On the authority of certain well-known men of learning whose reputations are established! We have never made or seen their experiments, but we believe their witness.

Just so you are to do with regard to Christ. Because He teaches you certain Truths of God you are to be His disciple, believe His Words and trust yourself with Him. He is infinitely superior to you and presents Himself to your confidence as your Master and Lord. If you will receive Him and His Words, you shall be saved. Another and a higher form of faith is that faith which grows out of love. Why does a boy trust his father? You and I know a little more about his father than he does and we do not rely upon him quite so implicitly. But the reason why the child trusts his father is because he loves him. Blessed and happy are they who have a sweet faith in Jesus intertwined with deep affection for Him! They are charmed with His Character and delighted with His mission. They are carried away by the loving kindness that He has manifested and now they cannot help trusting Him because they so much admire, revere and love Him.

It is hard to make you doubt a person whom you love. If you are, at last, driven to it, then comes the awful passion of jealousy which is strong as death and cruel as the gravebut till such a crushing of the heart shall come, love is all trust and confidence. The way of loving trust in the Savior may thus be illustrated. A lady is the wife of the most eminent physician of the day. She is seized with a dangerous illness and is struck down by its power. Yet she is wonderfully calm and quiet, for her husband has made this disease his special study and has healed thousands similarly afflicted. She is not in the least troubled, for she feels perfectly safe in the hands of one so dear to her, in whom skill and love are blended in their highest forms. Her faith is reasonable and naturalher husband from every point of view deserves it of her.

This is the kind of faith which the happiest of Believers exercise towards Christ! There is no physician like He! None can save as He can! We love Him and He loves us and, therefore, we put ourselves into His hands, accept whatever He prescribes and do whatever He bids. We feel that nothing can be wrongly ordered while He is the director of our affairs, for He loves us too much to let us perish, or suffer a single needless pang! Faith also realizes the Presence of the living God and Savior and thus it breeds in the soul a beautiful calm and quiet like that which was seen in a little child in the time of tempest. Her mother was alarmed, but the sweet girl was pleased. She clapped her hands with delight. Standing at the window when the flashes came most vividly, she cried in childish accents, Look, mamma! How beautiful! How beautiful!

Her mother said, My dear, come away, the lightning is terrible! But she begged to be allowed to look out and see the lovely light which God was making all over the sky, for she was sure God would not do His little child any harm. But listen to the terrible thunder, said her mother. Did you not say, Mamma, that God was speaking in the thunder? Yes, said her trembling parent. O, said the darling, how nice it is to hear Him! He talks very loud, but I think it is because He wants the deaf people to hear Him. Is it not so, Mamma? Thus she went talking on, as merry as a bird, was she, for God was real to her and she trusted Him! To her, the lightning was Gods beautiful light and the thunder was Gods wonderful voice, and she was happy. I dare say her mother knew a good deal about the laws of Nature and the energy of electricityand little was the comfort which her knowledge brought her!

The childs knowledge was less showy, but it was far more certain and precious. We are so conceited, nowadays, that we are too proud to be comforted by self-evident Truths of God and prefer to make ourselves wretched with questionable theories. Hood sang a deep spiritual truth when he merrily said

*I remember, I remember,   
The fir trees dark and high.   
I used to think their slender tops   
Were close against the sky.   
It was a childish ignorance,   
But now tis little joy   
To know Im further off from Heaven   
Than when I was a boy.*

For my own part I would rather be a child, again, than grow perversely wise. Faith is to be a child towards Christbelieving in Him as a real and present Personat this very moment near us and ready to bless us. This may seem to be a childish fancy, but it is such childishness we must all come to if we would be happy in the Lord. Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Faith takes Christ at His word, as a child believes his father, and trusts Him in all simplicity with past, present and future. God give us such faith!

A firm form of faith arises out of assured knowledge. This comes of growth in Grace and is the faith which believes Christ because it knows Him. It trusts Him because it has proven Him to be Infallibly faithful. This faith asks not for signs and tokens, but bravely believes! Look at the faith of the master marinerI have often been amazed at it! He looses his cable; he steams away from the shore. For days, weeks, or even months he never sees sail or shore, yet on he goes, day and night, without fear, till one morning he finds himself just opposite the desired haven towards which he has been steering! How has he found his way over the trackless deep? He has trusted in his compass, his nautical almanac, his glass and the heavenly bodies! And obeying their guidance, without sighting shore, he has steered so accurately that he has not to change a point to get into port. It is a wonderful thing, that sailing without sight!

Spiritually it is a blessed thing to leave the shores of sight and say, Good-bye to inward feelings, cheering providences, signs, tokens and so forth! I believe in God and I steer for Heaven straight away. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believedto them shall be administered an abundant entrance, at the last, and a safe voyage on the way. This is the faith which makes it easy to commit our soul and all its eternal interests into the Saviors keeping. One man goes to the bank and puts his money into it with a measure of confidence, but another has looked into the banks accounts and has been behind the scenes and made sure of its having a large reserve of well-invested capitalhe puts in his money with the utmost assurance! He knows and is established in his faith and so he cheerfully commits his all to the bank.

Even so, we who know Christ are glad to place our whole being in His hands, knowing that He is able to keep us even unto the end. God give us more and more an assured confidence in Jesus until it comes to be an unwavering faith, so that we never doubt, but unquestioningly believe! Look at the farmerhe labors with his plow in the wintry months, when there is not a leaf on the tree nor a bird that sings to cheer him and after he has plowed, he takes the precious corn from the granary, of which, perhaps, he has very little, and he buries it in the furrows, assured that it will come up again! Because he has seen a harvest 50 times, already, he looks for another and in faith he scatters the precious grain. To all appearances, the most absurd thing that ever was done by mortal man is to throw away good corn, burying it in the ground!

If you had never seen or heard of its results, it would seem the way of waste and not the work of farming, yet the farmer has no doubtshe longs to be allowed to cast away his seedin faith he even covets fair weather that he may bury his corn! And if you tell him that he is doing an absurd thing, he smiles at your ignorance and tells you that thus harvests come. This is a fair picture of the faith which grows of experienceit helps us to act in a manner contrary to appearancesit leads us to commit our all to the keeping of Christ, burying our hopes and our very lives with Him in joyful confidence that if we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. Jesus Christ who rose from the dead will raise us up through His death unto newness of life and give us a harvest of joy and peace!

Give up everything into the hands of Christ and you shall have it back with an abundant increase. May we get so strong a faith that, as we have no doubt of the rising and setting of the sun, we may never doubt the Saviors working for us in every hour of need! We have already trusted in our Lord and have never been confounded, therefore let us go on to rely upon Him more and more implicitlyfor never shall our faith in Him surpass the bounds of His deserving. Have faith in God and then hear Jesus say, You believe in God, believe also in Me.

II. Thus far I have done my best to answer what faith is. We shall now enquire WHY FAITH IS SELECTED AS THE CHANNEL OF SALVATION By Grace are you saved through faith. It becomes us to be modest in answering such a question, for Gods ways are not always to be understood. But, as far as we can tell, faith has been selected as the channel of Grace because there is a natural adaptation in faith to be used as the receiver. Suppose that I am about to give a poor man an alms. I put it into his handwhy? Well, it would hardly be fitting to put it into his ear, or to lay it upon his foot, the hand seems made on purpose to receive.

So faith in the mental body is created on purpose to be a receiverit is the hand of the man and there is a fitness in bestowing Grace by its means. Let me put this very plainly. Faith which receives Christ is as simple an act as when your child receives an apple from you because you hold it out and promise to give it the apple if it comes for it. The belief and the receiving relate only to an apple, but they make up precisely the same act as the faith which deals with eternal salvation! What the childs hand is to the apple, that is your faith to the perfect salvation of Christ. The childs hand does not make the apple, nor alter the appleit only receives it. And faith is chosen, by God, to be the receiver of salvation because it does not pretend to make salvation, nor to help in it, but it receives it.

Faith, again, is no doubt selected because it gives all the credit to God. It is of faith that it might be by Grace and it is of Grace that there may be no boasting, for God cannot endure pride. Paul says, Not of works, lest any man should boast. The hand which receives charity does not say, I am to be thanked for accepting the giftthat would be absurd! When the hand conveys bread to the mouth, it does not say to the body, Thank me, for I fed you. It is a very simple thing that the hand does, though a very necessary thingbut it never arrogates glory to itself for what it does. So God has selected faith to receive the unspeakable gift of His Grace because it cannot take to itself any credit, but must adore the gracious God who is the Giver of all good.

Next, God selects faith as the channel of salvation because it is a sure method, linking man with God. When man confides in God, there is a point of union between them and that union guarantees blessing. Faith saves us because it makes us cling to God and so brings us into union with Him. I have used the following illustration before, but I must repeat it because I cannot think of a better. I am told that years ago, above the Falls of Niagara, a boat was upset and two men were being carried down the current. Persons on the shore managed to float a rope out to them, which rope was seized by them both. One of them held fast to it and was safely drawn to the bank, but the other, seeing a great log come floating by, unwisely let go of the rope and clung to the log, for it was the bigger thing of the two and apparently better to cling to.

Alas, the log, with the man on it, went right over the vast abyss because there was no union between the log and the shore. The size of the log was no benefit to him who grasped itit needed a connection with the shore to produce safety. So when a man trusts to his works, or to sacraments, or to anything of that sort, he will not be saved because there is no connection between him and Christ. But faith, though it may seem to be like a slender cord, is in the hands of the great God on the shore! Infinite power pulls in the connecting line and thus draws the man from destruction. Oh, the blessedness of faith because it unites us to God! Faith is chosen, again, because it touches the springs of action. I wonder whether I shall be wrong if I say that we never do anything except through faith of some sort? If I walk across this platform it is because I believe my legs will carry me.

A man eats because he believes in the necessity of food. Columbus discovered America because he believed that there was another continent beyond the oceanmany another grand deed has also been born of faith, for faith works wonders. Common things are done on the same principle faith in its natural form is an all-prevailing force. God gives salvation to our faith because He has thus touched the secret spring of all our emotions and actions. He has, so to speak, taken possession of the battery and now He can send the sacred current to every part of our nature. When we believe in Christand the

heart has come into the possession of Godthen are we saved from sin and are moved towards repentance, holiness, zeal, prayer, consecration and every other gracious thing!

Faith, again, has the power of working by love. It touches the secret spring of the affections and draws the heart towards God. Faith is an act of the understanding, but it also proceeds from the heart. With the heart, man believes unto righteousness and, therefore, God gives salvation to faith because it resides next door to the affections and is near akin to love. And love, you know, is that which purifies the soul. Love to God is obedience! Love is holiness! To love God and to love man is to be conformed to the image of Christand this is salvation!

Moreover, faith creates peace and joy. He that has it rests, is tranquil, is glad and joyousand this is a preparation for Heaven. God gives all the heavenly gifts to faith because faith works in us the very life and spirit which are to be eternally manifested in the upper and better world. I have hastened over these points that I might not weary you on a day when, however willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak.

III. We close with the third pointHOW CAN WE OBTAIN AND INCREASE OUR FAITH? This is a very earnest question to many. They say they want to believe but cannot. A great deal of nonsense is talked upon this subject. Let us be practical in our dealing with it. What am I to do in order to believe? The shortest way is to believe and if the Holy Spirit has made you honest and candid, you will believe as soon as the Truth of God is set before you. Anyway, the Gospel command is clearBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. But still, if you have a difficulty, take it before God in prayer. Tell the great Father exactly what it is that puzzles you and beg Him, by His Holy Spirit, to solve the question. If I cannot believe a statement in a book, I am glad to enquire of the author what he meant, and if he is an honest man, his explanation will satisfy me. Much more will the Divine explanation satisfy the heart of the true seeker! The Lord is willing to make Himself known! Go to Him and see if it is not so!

Furthermore, if faith seems difficult, it is possible that God the Holy Spirit will enable you to believe if you hear very frequently and earnestly that which you are commanded to believe. We believe many things because we have heard them so often. Do you not find it so in common life, that if you hear a thing 50 times a day, at last you come to believe it? Some men have come to believe that which is false by this process, but I should not wonder but what God often blesses this method in working faith concerning that which is true, for it is written, Faith comes by hearing. If I earnestly and attentively hear the Gospel, it may be that one of these days I shall find myself believing that which I hear, through the blessed operation of the Spirit upon my mind.

If that, however, should seem poor advice, I would add, next, consider the testimony of others. The Samaritans believed because of what the woman told them concerning Jesus. Many of our beliefs arise out of the testimony of others. I believe that there is such a country as JapanI never saw it and yet I believe that there is such a place because others have been there. I believe I shall dieI have never died, but a great many have done so whom I once knewand I have a conviction that I shall also die. The testimony of many convinces me of this fact. Listen, then, to those who tell you how they were saved, how they were pardoned, how they have been changed in characterif you will but listen you will find that somebody just like yourself has been saved.

If you have been a thief, you will find that a thief rejoiced to wash away his sins in the fountain of Christs blood! You that have been unchaste in life, you will find that men who have fallen that way have been cleansed and changed! If you are in despair, you have only to get among Gods people and inquire a little, and some who have been equally in despair with yourself will tell you how He saved them! As you listen to one after another of those who have tried the Word of God and proved it, the Divine Spirit will lead you to believe. Have you not heard of the African who was told by the missionary that water sometimes became so hard that a man could walk on it? He declared that he believed a great many things the missionary had told him but he would never believe that.

When the African came to England it came to pass that one frosty day he saw the river frozen, but he would not venture on it. He knew that it was a river and he was certain that he would be drowned if he ventured upon it. He could not be induced to walk the ice till his friend went upon it. Then he was persuaded and trusted himself where others had ventured. So, perhaps, while you see others believe and notice their joy and peace, you will, yourself, be gently led to believe. It is one of Gods ways of helping us to faith. A still better plan is thisnote the Authority upon which you are commanded to believe and this will greatly help you. The authority is not mine, or you might well reject it. It is not even the popes, or you might even reject that. But you are commanded to believe upon the authority of God Himself! He bids you believe in Jesus Christ and you must not refuse to obey your Maker!

The foreman of a certain works in the north had often heard the Gospel, but he was troubled with the fear that he might not come to Christ. His good employer, one day, sent a card round to the worksCome to my house immediately after work. The foreman appeared at his employers door and the man came out and said somewhat roughly, What do you want, John, troubling me at this hour? Work is done, what right have you here? Sir, he said, I had a card from you saying that I was to come after work. Do you mean to say that merely because you had a card from me you are to come up to my house and call me out after business hours? Well, Sir, replied the foreman, I do not understand you, but it seems to me that since you sent for me, I had a right to come.

Come in, John, said his employer, I have another message that I want to read to you. And he sat down and read these wordsCome unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Do you think after such a message from Christ that you can be wrong in going to Him? The poor man saw it all at once and believed because he saw that he had good warrant and authority for believing! So have you, poor Soul! You have good authority for coming to Christ, for the Lord, Himself, bids you trust Him! If that does not settle you, think over what it is that you have to believethat the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in the place of men and is able to save all who trust Him. Why, this is the most blessed fact that ever men were told to believe! It is the most suitable, the most comforting, the most Divine Truth of God that was ever set before men!

I advise you to think much upon it and search out the Grace and love which it contains. Study the four Evangelists. Study Pauls Epistles and then see if the message is not such a credible one that you are forced to believe it! If that does not do, then think upon the Person of Jesus Christthink of who He is and what He didand where He is now and what He is now. Think often and deeply. When He, even such an one as He, bids you trust Him, surely your heart will be persuaded! How can you doubt Him? If none of these things avail, then there is something altogether wrong about you, and my last word is, submit yourself to God! May the Spirit of God take away your enmity and make you yield! You are a rebel, a proud rebel, and that is why you do not believe your God. Give up your rebellion! Throw down your weapons! Yield at discretion and surrender to your King!

I believe that never did a soul throw up its hands in self-despair and cry, Lord, I yield, but what faith became easy to it before long. It is because you still have a quarrel with God and intend to have your own will and your own way that you cannot believe. How can you believe, said Christ, that have honor one of another? Proud self creates unbelief. Submit, O man! Yield to your God and then shall you sweetly believe in your Savior. God bless you, for Christs sake, and bring you, at this very moment, to believe in the Lord Jesus. Amen.

[NOTE{Year 1881} While revising this sermon I felt moved to ask my readers to circulate it. I tried to be very simple and I think I succeeded. If you, dear Reader, think the sermon likely to show the way of salvation to those around you, will you not get extra copies and give them away? The preacher of the sermon and the giver of it will rejoice together if, by their united effort, men are led to faith in Jesus.]

[NOTE{YEAR 2004} I pray you are aware you can download and print this sermon (and pass it on) if you are reading it online. If not, you can go to http://www.spurgeongems.org and read/download it. Volume 27, Sermon No. 1609and if neither of these options apply to you, write me at, P.O. Box 702, Fulshear, TX, 77441-0702, and Lord willing, I will send you a copy in booklet form anywhere in the USAEOD]

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ALL OF GRACE   
NO. 3479

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1915.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For by Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.   
Ephesians 2:8.

OF the things which I have spoken unto you these many years, this is the sum. Within the circle of these words my theology is contained, so far as it refers to the salvation of men. I also rejoice to remember that these of my family who were ministers of Christ before me preached this Doctrine and none other. My father, who is still able to bear his personal testimony for his Lord, knows no other Doctrine, neither did his father before him.

I am led to remember this by the fact that a somewhat singular circumstance, recorded in my memory, connects this text with myself and my grandfather. It is now many years ago. I was announced to preach in a certain country town in the Eastern Counties. It does not often happen to me to be behind time, for I feel that punctuality is one of those little virtues which may prevent great sins. But we have no control over railway delays and breakdownsand so it happened that I reached the appointed place considerably behind time. Like sensible people, they had begun their worship and had proceeded as far as the sermon. As I neared the chapel, I perceived that someone was in the pulpit preachingand who should the preacher be but my dear and venerable grandfather! He saw me as I came in at the front door and made my way up the aisle. And he at once said, Here comes my grandson! He may preach the Gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better Gospel, can you, Charles? As I made my way through the throng, I answered, You can preach better than I can. Pray go on. But he would not agree to that. I must take the sermon, and so I did, going on with the subject then and there, just where he left off. There, he said, I was preaching on For by Grace are you saved. I have been setting forth the source and fountainhead of salvation. And I am now showing them the channel of it, through faith. Now you take it up, and go on.

I am so much at home with these glorious Truths of God that I could not feel any difficulty in taking from my grandfather the thread of his discourse and joining my thread to it, so as to continue without a break. Our agreement in the things of God made it easy for us to be jointpreachers of the same discourse! I went on with, through faith, and then I proceeded to the next point, and that not of yourselves. Upon this I was explaining the weakness and inability of human nature and the certainty that salvation could not be of ourselves, when I had my coattail pulled, and my well-beloved grandfather took his turn again. When I spoke of our depraved human nature, the good old man said, I know most about that, dear Friends. And so he took up the parable, and for the next five minutes set forth a solemn and humbling description of our lost estate, the depravity of our nature and the spiritual death under which we were found. When he had said his say in a very gracious manner, his grandson was allowed to go on again, to the dear old mans great delight, for now and then he would say, in a gentle tone, Good! Good! Once he said, Tell them that again, Charles. And, of course, I did tell them that again! It was a happy exercise for me to take my share in bearing witness to Truths of God of such vital importance, which are so deeply impressed upon my heart. While announcing this text I seem to hear that dear voice, which has been so long lost to earth, saying to me, TELL THEM THAT AGAIN.

I am not contradicting the testimony of forefathers who are now with God. If my grandfather could return to earth, he would find me where he left mesteadfast in the faith and true to that form of Doctrine which was once delivered to the saints. I shall handle the text briefly, by way of making a few statements. The first statement is clearly contained in the text

I. THERE IS PRESENT SALVATION.   
The Apostle says, You are saved. Not, you shall be, or, you may be, but, you are saved. He says not, You are partly saved, nor, on the way to being saved, nor, hopeful of salvation, but, by Grace are you saved. Let us be as clear on this point as he was and let us never rest till we know that we are saved! At this moment we are either saved or unsaved. That is clear. To which class do we belong? I hope that, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, we may be so assured of our safety as to sing, The Lord is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation. Upon this I will not linger, but pass on to note the next point.   
II. A PRESENT SALVATION MUST BE THROUGH GRACE.   
If we can say of any man, or of any set of people, You are saved, we shall have to preface it with the words, by Grace. There is no other present salvation except that which begins and ends with Grace. As far as I know, I do not think that anyone in the whole world pretends to preach or to possess a present salvation, except those who believe salvation to be all of Grace. No one in the Church of Rome claims to be now savedcompletely and eternally saved. Such a profession would be heretical! Some few Catholics may hope to enter Heaven when they die, but the most of them have the miserable prospect of purgatory before their eyes. We see constant requests for prayers for departed souls and this would not be if those souls were saved and glorified with their Savior! Masses for the repose of the soul indicate the incompleteness of the salvation which Rome has to offer. Well may it be so, since Papal salvation is by worksand even if salvation by good works were possible, no man can ever be sure that he has performed enough of them to secure his salvation!   
Among those who dwell around us, we find many who are altogether strangers to the Doctrine of Graceand they never dream of present salvation. Possibly they trust that they may be saved when they die. They half hope that after years of watchful holiness they may, perhaps, be saved at last, but to be saved now, and to know that they are saved is quite beyond themand they think it presumption!   
There can be no present salvation unless it is upon this footingBy Grace are you saved. It is a very singular thing that no one has risen up to preach a present salvation by works. I suppose it would be too absurd. The works being unfinished, the salvation would be incomplete or, the salvation being complete, the main motive of the legalist would be gone!   
Salvation must be by Grace. If man is lost by sin, how can he be saved except through the Grace of God!? If he has sinned, he is condemned how can he, of himself, reverse that condemnation? Suppose that he should keep the Law of God all the rest of his life? He will then only have done what he was always bound to have donehe will still be an unprofitable servant. What is to become of the past? How can old sins be blotted out? How can the old ruin be retrieved? According to Scripture and according to commonsense, salvation can only be through the free favor of God!   
Salvation in the present tense must be by the free favor of God. Persons may contend for salvation by works, but you will not hear anyone support his own argument by saying, I am, myself, saved by what I have done. That would be a superfluity of naughtiness to which few men would go! Pride could hardly compass itself about with such extravagant boasting. No, if we are saved, it must be by the free favor of God. No one professes to be an example of the opposite view.

Salvation to be complete must be by free favor . The saints, when they come to die, never conclude their lives by hoping in their good works. Those who have lived the most holy and useful lives invariably look to free Grace in their final moments. I never stood by the bedside of a godly man who reposed any confidence whatever in his own prayers, or repentance, or religiousness. I have heard eminently holy men quoting in death the words, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. In fact, the nearer men come to Heaven and the more prepared they are for it, the more simple is their trust in the merit of the Lord Jesusand the more intensely do they abhor all trust in themselves! If this is the case in our last moments, when the conflict is almost over, much more ought we to feel it to be so while we are in the thick of the fight! If a man is completely saved in this present time of warfare, how can it be except by Grace? While he has to mourn over sin that dwells in him, while he has to confess innumerable shortcomings and transgressions, while sin is mixed with all he does, how can he believe that he is completely saved except it be by the free favor of God?

Paul speaks of this salvation as belonging to the Ephesians, By Grace are you saved. The Ephesians had been given to curious arts and works of divination. They had thus made a covenant with the powers of darkness. Now if such as these were saved, it must be by Grace alone! So is it with us, alsoour original condition and character render it certain that if saved at all, we must owe it to the free favor of God! I know it is so in my own case and I believe the same rule holds good in the rest of Believers. This is clear enough and so I advance to the next observation

III. PRESENT SALVATION BY GRACE MUST BE THROUGH FAITH. A present salvation must be through Grace and salvation by Grace must be through faith. You cannot get a hold of salvation by Grace by any other means than by faith. This live coal from off the altar needs the golden tongs of faith with which to carry it. I suppose that it might have been possible, if God had so willed it, that salvation might have been through works and yet by Grace, for if Adam had perfectly obeyed the Law of God, he still would only have done what he was bound to doand so if God should have rewarded him, the reward, itself, must have been according to Gracesince the Creator owes nothing to the creature! This would have been a very difficult system to work, while the object of it was perfect, but in our case it would not work at all. Salvation in our case means deliverance from guilt and ruin. And this could not have been laid hold of by any measure of good works since we are not in a condition to perform any. Suppose I had to preach that you, as sinners, must do certain works and then you would be saved? And suppose that you could perform them? Such a salvation would not, then, have been seen to be altogether of Graceit would have soon appeared to be of debt. Apprehended in such a fashion, it would have come to you in some measure as the reward of work done and its whole aspect would have been changed. Salvation by Grace can only be gripped by the hands of faith! The attempt to lay hold upon it by the doing of certain acts of Law would cause the Grace to evaporate! Therefore, it is of faith that it might be by Grace. If by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Some try to lay hold upon salvation by Grace through the use of ceremoniesit will not do. You are christened, confirmed and caused to receive the holy sacrament from priestly hands. Or you are baptized, join the church, sit at the Lords Table. Does this bring you salvation? I ask you, Have you salvation? You dare not say, yes! If you did claim salvation of a sort, yet I am sure it would not be in your minds, salvation by Grace.   
Again, you cannot lay hold upon salvation by Grace through your feelings. The hand of faith is constructed for the grasping of a present salvation by Grace, but feeling is not adapted for that end. If you go about to say, I must feel that I am saved. I must feel so much sorrow and so much joy, or else I will not admit that I am saved, you will find that this method will not answer. As well might you hope to see with your ears, or taste with your eyes, or hear with your nose as to believe by feelingit is the wrong organ! After you have believed, you can enjoy salvation by feeling its heavenly influences! But to dream of getting a grasp of it by your own feelings is as foolish as to attempt to bear away the sunlight in the palm of your hand, or the breath of Heaven between the lashes of your eyes! There is an essential absurdity in the whole affair.   
Moreover, the evidence yielded by feeling is singularly fickle. When your feelings are peaceful and delightful, they are soon broken in upon and become restless and melancholy. The most fickle of elements, the most feeble of creatures, the most contemptible of circumstances may sink or raise our spirits! Experienced men come to think less and less of their present emotions as they reflect upon the little reliance which can be safely placed upon them. Faith receives the statement of God concerning His way of gracious pardon and thus it brings salvation to the man believing! But feeling, warming under passionate appeals, yielding itself deliriously to a hope which it dares not examine, whirling round and round in a sort of frenzied dance of excitement which has become necessary for its own sustaining, is all on a stir, like the troubled sea which cannot rest. From its toiling and raging, feeling is apt to drop to lukewarmness, despondency, despair and all the kindred evils! Feelings are a set of cloudy, windy phenomena which cannot be trusted in reference to the eternal Truths of God. We now go a step further   
IV. SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, IS NOT OF OURSELVES.   
The salvation, the faith and the whole gracious work together are not of ourselves!   
First, they are not of our former meritsthey are not the reward of former good endeavors. No unregenerate person has lived so well that God is bound to give him further Divine Grace and to bestow on him eternal life! Otherwise it were no longer of Grace, but of debt. Salvation is given to us, not earned by us. Our first life is always a wandering away from God and our new life of return to God is always a work of undeserved mercy, worked upon those who greatly need, but never deserve it!   
It is not of ourselves! In the further sense, it is not out of our original excellence. Salvation comes from above. It is never evolved from within. Can eternal life be evolved from the bare ribs of death? Some dare to tell us that faith in Christ and the new birth are only the development of good things that lay hidden in us by nature. But in this, like their father, they speak of their own. Sirs, if an heir of wrath is left to be developed, he will become more and more fit for the place prepared for the devil and his angels! You may take the unregenerate man and educate him to the highest degree, but he remains and must forever remain dead in sin unless a higher power shall come in to save him from himself! Grace brings into the heart an entirely foreign element. It does not improve and perpetuateit kills and makes alive! There is no continuity between the state of nature and the state of Grace. The one is darkness and the other is lightthe one is death and the other is life. Grace, when it comes unto us, is like a firebrand dropped into the sea where it would certainly be quenched were it not of such a miraculous quality that it baffles the water and sets up its reign of fire and light even in the depths!   
Salvation by Grace, through faith, is not of ourselves in the sense of being the result of our own power. We are bound to view salvation as being as surely a Divine act as Creation, or Providence, or Resurrection. At every point of the process of salvation, this word is appropriatenot of yourselves. From the first desire after it, to the full reception of it by faith, it is always of the Lord, alone, and not of ourselves. The man believes, but that belief is only one result among many of the implantation of Divine Life within the mans soul by God, Himself!

Even the very will to be saved by Grace is not of ourselves , but is the gift of God! There lies the stress of the question. A man ought to believe in Jesusit is his duty to receive Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sins. But man will not believe in Jesushe prefers anything rather than faith in his Redeemer! Unless the Spirit of God convinces the judgment and constrains the will, man has no heart to believe in Jesus unto eternal life! I ask any saved man to look back upon his own conversion and explain how it came about. You turned to Christ and believed on His namethese were your own acts and deeds. But what caused you to turn? What sacred force was that which turned you from sin to righteousness? Do you attribute this singular renewal to the existence of a something better in you than has been yet discovered in your unconverted neighbor? No, you confess that you might have been what he now is if it had not been that there was a potent something which touched the spring of your will, enlightened your understanding and guided you to the foot of the Cross! Gratefully we confess the fact! It must be so. Salvation by Grace, through faith, is not of ourselves, and none of us will dream of taking any honor to ourselves from our conversion, or from any gracious effort which has flowed from the first Divine Cause. Last of all

V. BY GRACE ARE YOU SAVED THROUGH FAITH AND THAT NOT OF OURSELVESIT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.   
Salvation may be called Theodora, or Gods gift. And each saved soul may be surnamed, Dorothea, which is another form of the same expression. Multiply your phrases and expand your expositions, but salvation truly traced to its well-head is all contained in the unspeakable giftthe free, unmeasured benison of love!  
Salvation is the gift of God, in opposition to a wage. When a man pays another his wage, he does what is right and no one dreams of condemning him for it. But we praise God for salvation because it is not the payment of debt but the gift of Grace. No man enters eternal life on earth, or in Heaven, as his dueit is the gift of God. We say, Nothing is freer than a gift. Salvation is so purely, so absolutely a gift of God that nothing can be more free! God gives it because He chooses to give it according to that grand text which has made many a man bite his lip in wrathI will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. You are all guilty and condemned, but the Great King pardons whom He wills from among you! This is His royal prerogative! He saves in Infinite Sovereignty of Grace.   
Salvation is the gift of Godthat is to say completely soin opposition to the notion of growth. Salvation is not a natural production from within. It is brought from a foreign zone and planted within the heart by heavenly hands! Salvation is in its entirety a gift from God. If you will have it, there it is, complete! Will you have it as a perfect gift, No. I will produce it in my own workshop. You cannot forge a work so rare and costly upon which even Jesus spent His lifes blood! Here is a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. It will cover you and make you glorious! Will you have it? No. I will sit at the loom and I will weave a raiment of my own! Proud fool that you are! You spin cobwebs! You weave a dream! Oh, that you would freely take what Christ upon the Cross declared to be finished!  
It is the gift of God. That is, it is eternally secure in opposition to the gifts of men, which soon pass away. Not as the world gives, give I unto you, says our Lord Jesus. If my Lord Jesus gives you salvation at this moment, you have it and you have it forever! He will never take it back and if He does not take it from you, who can? If He saves you, now, through faith, you are savedso saved that you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of His hand. May it be so with all of us! Amen.

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NOT BOASTING, BUT TRUSTING   
NO. 3408

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 28, 1914.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
Not of works lest any man should boast.   
Ephesians 2:9.

THIS is very plain. There is no mistaking the sense. We are saved by Grace and not by our own doings. A reason is assigned. If we were saved by our own doings, it would be natural and certain that we would boast. It is well that the Apostle is so very explicit here and elsewhere upon this Doctrine, for men will fall against and blunt the edge of his statement. Self-righteousness is the natural religion of every degraded heart. Only the Spirit of God can make a man really receive and acknowledge the Truth of God. The Apostle seems determined that if any reject it, it shall not be for lack of clearness in his statement as a teacher. He does not beat about the bush, or go round about, or mince mattershe comes at once to the point, By Grace are you savedand then he gives the negative, the backstroke of the sword, Not of works, lest any man should boast. This is the old controversy of Christianity from the very beginning. The first heavy fire of the Gospel ordinance was directed against the Judaizers. They said salvation was by ceremonies and the works of the Law of God. In all sorts of shapes and ways, sometimes straightforwardly and sometimes cunningly, they tried to get into the Christian Church the idea that the works of men could have some merit in them and contribute in some degree to their salvation! The Apostle was a very sturdy opponent of this subtle innovation. His Epistle to the Romans, his Epistle to the Galatians, his Epistle to the Ephesians and, indeed, all his writings seem like so many cannons dragged to the front and discharging red-hot shot against the very idea of salvation by the works of the Law. By the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified, he says, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.

Further down in the history of the Christian Church this old conflict was renewed very vehemently by Martin Luther and his brother Reformers against the Church of Rome. You must not think that the great point of difference between the Protestants and Romanists is whether we shall obey that respectable old gentleman at Rome or not! Or whether we shall have our ministers dressed in blue and scarlet and fine linenor in common broadcloth, like ourselves. Those trifles may become important as ostensible signs of profession, but they are not the main point at issue. They are merely the husk of the controversy! The real battle between the Papists and the Protestants turns on thisare men saved by works, or are they saved by Grace? All the Reformers that ever tried to reform the Church of Rome by interfering with her mummeries and her monasteries, her priests and their vestments, her holy days and celebrations, and I do not know what besides, were all just fiddling away with a wasted force at some of the external branches of that horrible old upas tree! But when Luther came fresh from the cell with that Light of God still beaming from his eyes, We are justified by faith, then it was that the axe was laid at the root of this tree! There is nothing needed to bring down popery but the constant promulgation of this one Truth of GodIt is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy, for salvation is not of man, neither by manit is of the Lord and it is given to as many as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts! In fact, this is the standing controversy, today, before which all other controversies dwindle into insignificance. The outside world still has it that they will be saved by their own doings. The host of Gods elect, stripped of their own righteousness and made to put on the righteousness of Christ, stand, each man, with his sword upon his side and his shield in his hand, defensive for this one Truth of God, this vital Truth of God, the allimportant Truth of the Gospel!

For this, Brothers and Sisters, we ought, every one of us, to be prepared to shed our blood! To obliterate or to disguise this Truth were to put out the lamp that illuminates this dark world! Take away the only ointment that can heal earths wounds! To destroy the only medicine that will ever cure the diseases of humanityJustified by faith, saved by Grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.

At this time, let us briefly consider a great negativenot of works. A great reasonlest any man should boast. And then throw in, one after the other, with very little order, a few thoughts about this great matter.

I. A GREAT NEGATIVENot of works. Now, Brothers and Sisters, it must not be of works because that way has been tried and has proved a complete failure. Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden under circumstances peculiarly conducive to his happiness. The Law of God which was to test him was remarkably simple. It contained but one command, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. Adam was not, as we are, corrupthis constitution had no tendency to sin. He was pure and perfect with well balanced judgment and without bias one way or the other. He had never sinnedhe need not ever to have sinned! It seems to me, he had nothing to gain by sin. His paradise was as perfect as it could be! God had been pleased to give him everything necessary to make him abundantly happy. But under these circumstancesthe most favorable in which humanity was ever placedthe way of acceptance before God by works broke lamentably down!

Whether after a short or long term of probation, we will not sayit is folly to speak where Scripture is silentit is certain that when tempted, he lapsed, for the woman took the fruit and the man also partook of it. Then acceptance by works became like a potters vessel smashed with a rod of iron! Man had tried the way of merit and bitter, indeed was the award. Despair, you sons of Adamwhere your father failed, though up to then untaintedyou, with perverted will, with imagination apt to picture pleasantry in sin, with judgment warped and strained by innate depravity, by the infection of example and by the force of surrounding circumstancesthink not that you can stand upright where perfect Adam fell! Hope not to find a way back through the gates of Paradise, for there still stands the cherub with his flaming swordand no flesh living shall henceforth be saved by his works! The way of salvation by works is utterly unsuitable for us! It is not only fruitless, proved to be so, but it is inconsistent. Anything which involves an impossibility is vain to propose. Propose to a man without feet that he should walk, or to a man without eyes that he should distinguish colorsyou see the follybut is it not equally absurd to recommend a convict to seek a peerage? It is impossible for any one of us to obtain merits before God!

We have all confessedly sinned already. Our present status debars us from entering the list for future honors. By what means are we to put away this old sin? There it stands. Suppose we obey God from this time forth till we die without a single faultwe shall then only have done what it was our duty to perform and God had a right to expect of us! There will be no balance left, nothing to put per contra against our sins, nothing to our credit as a reduction of our liabilitieswe would only have paid the current account, supposing that to be possible. The debt will still remain! The old scorewho is to pay that? Oh, says one, we apply to Christ for that. No, no, Sir! If it is to be by works, you must keep to works, for the Apostle lays it down in the 11th of Romans that, if it is of Grace, it is not of works, and if it is of works it is not of Grace. Two principles, these, which will not minglehave which you like. They are like oil and water, or, rather, like fire and waterthey are opposed to each other! If Christ is to save you, He must do it altogether. He will never be a make-weight for you, depend upon it! He did not come into this world to make up a few deficienciesnot at all so! He will not have you boasting! He will not have you sharing the honor of your salvation with Him!

God demands of every man a perfect lifehaving all sinned, we cannot bring Him a perfect life. You have cracked that vase. And, if you do not break it again, it is already cracked. Oh, but you tell me, it is only in a little place. Yes, but if there is only one link in the chain broken which drags up the miner from the deeps of the earth, it is quite enough for his destruction that one link is broken! There is no need to have a dozen links fretted through with rust, the one flaw is sufficient. If you will be saved by works, you must be absolutely perfect, for it is inconsistent with the Justice of God that He should accept any but perfect obedience from the creatures that come under His sway. Can you render this?

If you know yourselves, you will say, we cannot. You will look on the flames that Moses saw when Sinai was on a blazeyou will tremble and despair of ever saving yourselves!

But, again, while the way has been proven to be fruitless and is certainly unsuitable, it is a way which, with all his talking, no man ever does fairly try. I have often noticed that those who prate loudest of good works are those that have the fewest good deeds to make mention of. Like little traders in the streets with their little stock of commodities, they had need cry and advertise their wares because they have so little to sell! Whereas a diamond merchant or dealer in bullion sits still and never makes a noise at all because he has precious treasure by him. Your hard talkers about good works generally come from some disreputable haunt. They will even boast that their sentiments are better than their habits. Well, they need be! I have seen them put their black and smutty fingers upon the bright Gospel of Christ and say, This leads to licentiousness. Pity, then, Sir, you should ever approach it, since you can find licentiousness fast enough without it! Pure minds see God in the Gospel. They veil their faces and bow before its majesty. Ah, well might I preach up morality, but not as the way of salvation, or what would be the result of it? What said Chalmers during the early part of his life? He said, I preached up sobriety till nearly all my followers became great drinkers. I preached up honesty till I manufactured thieves. The more I preached of the right which man ought to do, the more I found men doing wrong. These are not his words, but they are the sense of his own solemn confession when he came to read the pure Gospel and began to preach it with all his heart!

So is it with every man and I suppose it always will be. Dry essays about duty run off and slide like oil down a slab of marblewhile the proclamation of the Gospel of the Grace of God in pardoning the chief of sinners attracts men to Jesus, breaks their hearts, causes them to hate sin, sets them upon reformation, makes them holy and helps them to persevere even to the end! Not of works, says the textand we come back to it. If salvation were by works and could be so worked out listenthen Calvary would be a superfluity! The Cross of Christ, with all its wonders, would be a work of supererogation on Gods part! The work of Redemption would be a subject of derision for us! Is there no salvation, or is there salvation somehow else? Must God come down and take the form of man and in that form must the Christ of God suffer even unto deathand all for nothingfor it comes to that! If man can save himself, what is there need of you angels? Hush your Christmas carols! What need for those gazing eyes and that absorbing wonder as you watch the manifestation of the Lord of Glory, Incarnate among men? What needs it that the Prophets talk of the Lamb of God and point us to the Infinite Sacrifice? What need is there that Jesus wears the crown of thorns and bows His head to die for us? There are men who say we can work our own passage to the stars and by our merits enshrine ourselves among the blessed. Sirs, which shall I believethat God has worked a work that need not have been, or that you are under the spell of a fatal delusion? Let God be true and every man a liar. You can find no way to Heaven but by the Cross!

*Could your zeal no respite know,   
Could your tears forever flow   
All for sin could not atone   
Christ must save, and Christ alone!*

Those persons who prate most of salvation by works, whether they acknowledge it or not, do really lower the standard of holiness and abate the dignity of the Law of God. You come to probe them and the old story which Whitefield and John Vaudois fought against so valiantly of Saxon obedience is the petition of the self-righteous mans creed. Well, he says, I cant keep all the Law of GodI admit that. As to thoughts, deeds and words, I cant be quite clean, but I will do my best. Now, what is this but to altogether lower the Law of God because you cannot come up to Gods Law? Is the Almighty God to come down to your terms? Do you think to barter with Him? Can your miserable three farthings in the pound satisfy a Divine Law? This will never be! Heaven and earth shall pass away, says Christ, but not one jot or one tittle of the Law shall fail. This is the Word of God spoken from Sinai, Cursed is every man that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.

God will not take part payment! Holiness, let me tell you, Sirs, is a very different thing from that morality which some men boast of! Why, I almost hold my breath when I encounter some mens morality that they talk so much of! Those loose tongues that chatter so glibly against the Gospel as fomenting licentiousnessif they did but once cry, God be merciful to us sinners, would come much nearer to playing their right part. Men that are sinning daily in open violation of common virtue will talk as though they were pure in all their tastes, holy in all their thoughts and above suspicion in all their lives? Oh, no! Gods holiness is something more grand, more sublime than you and I have guessed at! And we shall not reach to that by our works, at any rate, for they are blotted, blurred, marred and spoiled upon the wheel like the figures of an illtaught potterand we cannot presume to exhibit them before the living God.

II. A GREAT REASON IS GIVENa few words on itNot of works lest any man should boast. If any man could get to Heaven by his own works, what a boaster he would naturally be! I am sure he would be so on earth. This is the part he would play. He would hear that God, in His mercy, had been forgiving some great sinner and that there was joy in Heaven over him. And he would say, I cannot take my share in such pleasures as that. I have never transgressed His Commandments. I find myself very tightly bound and I do not get much joy out of it. Here is that renegade who has been given to sin and he is to be saved! I do not like it. You know where to read the story in Lukes Gospel, He was angry and would not go in, therefore his father came and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandments and yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this, your son was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf. Pretty specimen of a son, but the picture of what any man would be who felt, I owe God nothing. I am all rightI am saved by my own works.

What a churl he would be in the Church! I am sure I would be very sorry to admit such a man to our assemblies. I would feel that he was quite out of place with poor sinners saved by Grace like ourselves, who have nothing to boast of. It would make the whole Church wretched to have such people in Church fellowship! Why, if we did not idolize them, we would hate them! I do not know which of the two it would be certainly they would be much out of place in our assemblies with their boasting. And what would they do in Heaven? Why, the very reverse of what all the spirits are doing who are therethese all sing, We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lambthey would have to say, We kept our raiment white ourselves. When the ransomed spirits cast their crowns at His feet, the self-righteous souls would hold high their crests and wear their tiaras, saying, We have won them ourselves and we have a right to them! It would spoil Heaven! Heaven would not be the perfection of harmony. Such beings would occasion discord in the Glory Landa greater discord than seen in the universe since the Fall! No, no! It is Not of works, lest any man should boast!

Do I hear somebody say, We do not maintain that men are to be saved by works altogether, but partly by Gods Grace and partly by their own works. Well, I will suppose for a moment that this strange monster can be manufactureda saint compounded part of Grace and part of works! Well now, in what proportion are these two opposite qualities to be brought together? How much Grace and how much works? Half works? Yes. Then how about those poor fellows who come very near half? Well, one quarter works? Yes. And then three-quarters Grace? Well, perhaps some more, and some less. Some three-quarters works, some half works and some only one-eighth works and so on. You will have to arrange them very orderly, you knowand depend upon it that as soon as they find out the proportion of their salvation that was by worksin that proportion they will begin to boast! I would and I do not think I would be to blame if I did. I would say, Now, here I am, saved half by my works. Here is a lot of these poor believers in Christ who were saved altogether by Grace, but I have contributed of my own means a full half to my salvation. I do not mind just lifting my crown a littlejust admit I had help in getting it on my head, but I am not going to cast it down at His feet every man has a right to what is his due!   
I thought Napoleon did a good thing when, on the day of his coronation, he took his crown and put it on his own head. Why should he not take the symbol that was his due? And if you get to Heaven one half by Grace and one half by works, you will say, Atonement profited me a little, but integrity profited me much more! Do I seem to you to talk sarcastically? Be it admitted I do! Were it possible for me to kick this idea of human merit like a football round the world, Sirswere it possible to set it in the pillory of scorn and pelt it with I know not what of filth, I would feel that I had the Apostle Paul standing by my side and saying, What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And I would hear him say of his own righteousness, I count it as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him. He could not have taken a coarser figure, nor one which expressed more thoroughly his hearty contempt of everything like self-righteousnessI count it as dung that I may win Christ, and be found in Him. Lest any man should boastthis is a good and sufficient reason why salvation should not be of works! Now

III. A FEW THOUGHTS WITHOUT ORDER, but I hope they may catch your attention and stick in your memory. Some sayI know it is a common observationthis talking about sinners coming to Christ just as they are and trusting in Him alone for their salvation is very dangerous. Respectable persons and people who think themselves qualified to be critics, generally make some such observation as thisit is very dangerous. Now my dear Friends, if you will condescend to listen for a minute, I would remind you that neither you nor I have anything to do with making the Gospel. We may think the Gospel ought to be such-and-such, but that does not make it so. And if I should choose to think, or if you should, that such-and-such a Doctrine is very dangerous, that neither makes it true nor makes it false, for, after all, the great solemn appeal about all matters of religion is not to you, nor yet to me! We stand on an equal footing thereyou may think one thing and I may think another. But the Judgethe Judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail, must decide. The great question is, What say the Scriptures? What does the Old Book say? If it does not teach that the salvation of a sinner is altogether by Grace and not of works, it does not teach anything at all and there are no words in any language that mean anything! I must be made to believe that black is white and that God has purposely and willfully written a Book to deceive us, before I can believe salvation to be by works! For the expressions about this matter are not a few. They are not casualthey are not dark and mysterious, they are not metaphorical they are plain, simple and obvious. I challenge any manI will not say any theologianbut any man of common-sense that can read the Bible whether he uses our version, or prefers the originalif he will but read it honestly, he can come to no other conclusion in reading the Epistles of Paul than thisthat salvation is by Grace through faith in the merits of Christand not at all by the works of the Law.

Now, that is a thing that ought to decide and end the matter. I ask you not to heed anything I saydo not take my word for itmy ipse dixit is nothing! It is in Gods Book and on your heads it must be if you deny it! Oh, said one to another, I didnt like your preaching the other night. What didnt you like in it? I didnt like your preaching up salvation to sinners. Oh, that is nothing to me, the quarrel is not between you and me, but between you and my Master. You must settle that with Him. I have nothing to do with manufacturing Doctrinesmy business is to preach them as I find them in the Scripture. If you do not like them, you must leave them, but it is at your own peril. Let me say to all of you, I beseech you cast not away your own soul!

Everyone of us ought to remember that a great deal of that commodity in this world known by the name of good works is not good works at all. What is a good work? I would venture to say that anything that has in it the element of selfishness is not good. You may question that, but I think it is the highest virtue to be unselfish. If a man is found to be virtuous, as we say, with the design of benefiting

himself, has he not spoiled his virtue? The very design of seeking merit by what he does, spoils the possibility of merit! A man is not a servant of God while he is only serving himself. It is only when he gets rid of self that he becomes truly good. To pray may be good or not, according to whether it is real prayer. To attend the House of God, or give alms to the poor may be good or not good, according to the heart. But external duties are not good works! No, though a man should be faultless in his external life, yet if the motive were sinister and the desires unclean, his works would all taste of the fountain from where they came and not be good in the sight of God. Did it ever strike you that in our works the heart must always be the great matter?

Cowper, in his Task, has very wonderfully worked out this subject in the best blank verse. He pictures two footmen employed by youone of them is a very polite, quick, nimble, handy fellowbut, as he says, he serves you for your house, your housemaid, and your pay. Let either of these be gone and he is gone, too. But the true servant is Charles, that stands behind the chair, that is troubled if your appetite seems to fail, that has been with you from a boy, that if you were poor and hadnt any pay to give him, would cling to the posts of your doorsthat would live for you and die for youthat is the man whom you love as a servant! So it is with virtue. The best and highest of good works are those that spring from love, real love to God! Now, where do you find this? In the man who rejects Christ? Nohis works are those of a slavish fear! He does not serve God out of love, but because he trembles at the thought of Hell. But when a soul is brought to trust in Jesus, then the heart loves God, the service of God becomes a great delight and the man who says, I am not saved by works, works ten times harder than he ever would have done if he had hoped to be saved by his own doings! And his works are better works because he has devoted love which infuses into them a sacred excellency which otherwise had not been there.

Be it forever known and understood that when we preach salvation by Grace, we do not undervalue morality. No, Brothers and Sisters, we exalt it! I will give you proof. There is a hospital. It is free to all the sick, but there is a notion about town that nobody may enter there except those who do something to heal themselves. Now, I will suppose that I am sent as a missionary to go among the sick and tell them that their own health is not worth a farthing, that they are to come to the hospital gates just as they are, that at the hospital they look at disease as a qualification and not at health. Somebody might say, Here is this man undervaluing health. My dear Brother, I am doing no such thing! Do you think I would be trying to get these sick people into the hospital if I undervalued health? It is not health I undervalueit is the quackery that mimics health! It is this empiricism which films over mens diseases, which had need be dealt with otherwise. Why, if thousands in London were dying because they had the notion that they could not be received at the hospital unless they healed themselves, surely it were the kindest and best work a man could doand the quickest means to promote the popular healthto go and dissuade men of this absurd notion! If, my Brothers and Sisters, when we bade you come to Christ, we told you that after coming to Him, you might live in sin as you did before, we would be worthy to be hanged! But when we tell you that Christ is a Physician and His Church a hospitaland that He can heal you if living in sin, we do not by any means decry your morality, but only tell you that it is but a piece of quackery until you come to Christ!

*Speak they of morals, oh, You bleeding Lamb! The best morality is love to You!*   
The best holiness is to love Christ and to serve Him actuated by the motive of gratitude! And if you try merit before you come to Him, it will only

plunge you into deeper sin! You cannot blot out your iniquities. Still I know the scandal will be repeated, but if any choose to repeat it, the lives of those who have preached up salvation by Grace furnish the best answer. In the days of Charles the First and Charles the Second, you would have found the party headed by Laud in the Church of England crying up ritual, crying up good works. You would have found on the other hand, the Puritan party rigidly preaching up Justification by Faith and Salvation by Grace. Now, Sirs, where did you find the country parson that preached in the morning upon good works, in the afternoon? Why, with a girl on either side dancing round the Maypole, according to the Book of Sports! And if you needed him a little later in the evening, you would have to send some trusty parish beadle to bring him in from the village alehouse!

But where is the man who preached salvation by Grace while at the conventicle? Oh says one, he is at home singing Psalms with his family. Doesnt he go round the Maypole? No, the old bigot, he never breaks the Sabbath. He says it is against the Law of God. Well, but isnt he in the alehouse? No, I dare say the old superstitious creature is on his knees somewhere, praying. Everybody knows this was the fact! The Puritan theology bred Puritan livingthe Doctrine of Justification by Faith made men holy! But the other party that preached this wonderful doctrine of salvation by works went pretty far to prove, at any rate, that they could not be saved by their works! The long-haired cavaliers, with their scented locks and their abominations not fit to be uttered by pure tongue, or heard by the ear of decencythese were your work mongers, your upholders of salvation by your own doings! But the man that ordered his household well in the fear of God, the man that could bend to God but not to a tyrant, the man that loved his country and would sooner die on Edge Hill or Naseby than he would lay down the faith he held dear to himthat is the man who preached that we are justified by faith and not at all by the works of the Law! You shall find holiness grows out of the one Doctrine which is despisedand wickedness springs from the other which is advertised as a panacea for all ills!

If there are any here that think they can be saved by their own works, I have no Gospel to preach to them whatever. I will not interfere with them. My Master has said that there is no need of a physician to them that are not sick. Good people, virtuous people, excellent peopleyou that are going to Heaven all on your own accountdont quarrel with us poor sinners because we choose to have what you despise! If you do not want the medicine, let us drink it and be not bitter against us if we choose another way than yours. If your road is broad enough and there are enough companions in it, let us alone if we choose the narrow path!

But yet I cannot coolly dismiss you so. If you are naked, poor and miserableI will not insult you. I counsel you by my Masterget gold tried in the fire that you may be rich and white raiment that you may be clothedand if you know not how you can buy it, I will tell you. It is without money and without price! It is freely given and shall be given to you if you will take it. Shake your hand of that venomous serpent of your own self-confidence! Shake it into the fire, I pray youit is the best place for it! You may come with empty hands to Christ and He will give you all your soul can want. When you come to die, you will find that good-works theory unable to bear you up. The best of men have looked upon their lives from that closing scene in another manner than they ever did before. One said he was gathering up all his workshis good works and his bad works, tooand flinging them all overboard that he might just simply trust in a Crucified Savior. At any rate, Friend, if you are prepared to risk your soul on your works, I am not prepared to risk mine on anything that I have done! No, I am not afraid to meet the trial hour. I am not afraid to look you in the face to-night and say, I will meet you on that tremendous day and we will see whose confidence is the better. You shall take your works if you will, and I will take my Lord! And you shall rest in what you do, but I will not rest in anything I do. Oh, rest well upon Him and I will tell you what will happen when the whirlpools of Almighty Wrath shall be round about you! Your good works shall go like those deceitful life-buoys we heard of the other dayand you shall sink! But never did a soul sink that could cling to Christ! It is an unheard of thing that Christ has ever let a sinner perish, for He has said, Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.

Now, whether you have been righteous or wicked, whether you can cry yourselves up, or whether you bewail yourselves that you are deep in the mire of singo, stretch out your hand and take Christ! Turn your eyes to Jesus, dying upon Calvarys Cross and look to Him

*There is life in a look of the Crucified One!* There is life at this moment for you! I wish that everyone in this dense mass would look to my Master. There is Grace enough in Christ for everyone of you! No sinner was ever lost because there was any stint in Christ! No, but because they would not come and thought themselves too good for Him. Come as you arejust as you are and trust Christ. And then mark you, you will be saved! You will be saved from the love of sin! You will be saved from the power of it! You will begin a new and holy life. You will henceforth be full of good works which shall abound to the Glory of Godand with these good works upon you, you shall be like a tree that is covered with rich fruit, acceptable to God! Still your root shall not be your fruit, but your root shall be a simple faith in a precious Christ whom this night I have declared unto you. So God bless you. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 5:1-9.**

Verse 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have it to-night. We enjoy it. We delight in it, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. By whom also we have access by faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only have we peace, but we get into the favor of God and we stand in it! This is the Grace or favor which comes of being justified. We now feel a freedom to come into our Fathers Presence because He has forgiven us for Christs sake. We now feel at home with Him though once we were prodigal sons and had wandered far away. And we rejoice in hope of the Glory of God. We have something yet in reservepresent peace, but future perfection! We have present rest, but there still remains a rest for the people of God. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

3-5. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations, also, knowing that tribulation works patience. And patience, experience, and experience, hope. And hope makes us not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. So that even what might seem to be the disadvantages of this present life are made to work into advantages! And what at one time might threaten our prosperity, really conduces to it. Patience, which we never could have if we never had a trouble, is given to us. And experience, which we never could have if we did not patiently endure the trouble we obtain! We get pearls out of these deep seas. We get treasures out of these blazing furnaces which seem to smelt our blessings, that they may come to us rich and pure. And, above all, there rises a glorious hope, never to be drownednever to be made ashamedbecause we feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts like a sweet perfume making every part of our nature fragrant because the Holy Spirit is there!

6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. That was our character. There was no good point about us. We were ungodly and we had no strength to mend ourselves or to be other than ungodly. The strength for reformation had all gone. The strength for regeneration we never had. We were without strength and then Christ died for usdied for the ungodly!

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man. A benevolent, loving-spirited man.   
7, 8. Some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And that is the glory of His Love! While we were rebels against His government, He redeemed us. While we were far off from Him by wicked works, He sent His Son to die and bring us near. Free Grace, indeed, was thisnot caused by anything in us but springing freely from the great heart of God!   
9. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. You see the force of the argument? If He loved us when we were still dead in sin, much more will He keep us and preserve us now that He has justified us! Were His enemies redeemed? Shall not His friends be kept? Did He love those who were still far off? Will He not love those who are brought nearand love us even to the end?

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2210 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE AGREEMENT OF SALVATION BY GRACE WITH WALKING IN GOOD WORKS   
NO. 2210

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 28, 1891, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them   
Ephesians 2:9, 10.

I shall call your attention to the near neighborhood of these two phrases, Not of works and, Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. The text reads with a singular sound, for it seems strange to the ear that good works should be given such a negative description as to the cause of salvation and then should be spoken of as the great end of it! You may put it down among what the Puritans called, Orthodox Paradoxes, if you please, though it is hardly so difficult a matter as to deserve the name.

Not long ago, I tried to handle the point of difference supposed to exist between the doctrine of faithBelieve, and you shall be saved, and the doctrine of the new birth and its necessityYou must be born again. My method was on this wiseI did not explain the difficulties which appear to the logician and the doctor of metaphysics, but I tried to show that, practically, there were none. If we deal only with difficulties which block up the way to salvation, there are none. As for those matters which involve no real hindrance, I leave them where they are. A rock which is in nobodys way may stand where it is. He that believes in Jesus is born again. These two things are equally truethere must be a work of the Spirit within, yet he that believes in the Lord Jesus has everlasting life.

Now, there is a contention always going on about the doctrine of good works, but instead of taking one side or the other, we shall try to see whether there is really anything to quarrel over if we keep to the Scriptures. We insist upon it, with all our might, that salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. But, on the other hand, we freely admit and earnestly teach that, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Where there are no good works, there is no indwelling of the Spirit of God! The faith which does not produce good works is not saving faithit is not the faith of Gods electit is not faith at all in the Scriptural sense. I have just taken these two points to bring them forward for the help and comfort of beginners. I seek not to instruct you who are already well taught, but my aim at this time is to instruct beginners on this important subject. Salvation is not of works, but, at the same time, we, who are the subjects of Divine Grace, are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. This is plain to the enlightened Believer, but babes in Grace have weak eyes and cannot at once perceive it.

Before, in the gracious Providence of God, Luther was raised up to preach the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the common notion among religious persons was that men must be saved by worksand the result was that, knowing nothing of the root from which virtue springs, very few persons had any good works at all! Religion so declined that it became a mere matter of empty ceremony, or of useless seclusion and, in addition, superstition overlaid the original Truth of the Gospel, so that one could hardly find it out at all. The reign of self-justification and priestcraft led to no good result upon the masses of religious people. Indulgences and forgiveness of sins were hawked through the streets and publicly sold. So much was charged for the pardon of one sin and so much for another, and the treasury of his holiness at Romewho might better have been called, his unholinesswas filled by payments for abating penalties in a purgatory of Romes inventing!

Luther learned from the sacred Volume, by the Spirit of the Lord, that we are saved by Grace, alone, through faithand, having found it out, he was so possessed by that one Truth of God that he preached it with a voice of thunder! His witness on that one point was so concentrated that it would be too much to expect equal clearness upon all other Truths of God. I sometimes compare him to a bull who shuts his eyes and goes straight on at the one objective which he means to overthrow. With a mighty crash, he broke down the gates of Papal superstition! He saw nothinghe did not need to see anythingexcept thisBy Grace are you saved through faith. He made very clear and good work upon that point, faulty as he was upon certain others. The echoes of his manly voice rang down the centuries. I note that nearly all the sermons of Protestant divines, long after Luther, were upon Justification by Faith and, whatever the text might be, they somehow or other brought in that article of a standing or falling Church. They seldom finished a sermon without declaring that salvation is not by works, but that it is by faith in Jesus Christ.

I do not censure them for a moment! Far rather do I commend them better too much than too little upon the central doctrine of the Gospel. The times needed that point to be made clear to all comers and the Reforming preachers made it clear. Justification by Faith was the nail that had to be driven home and clinchedand all their hammers went at that nail. They were not nearly so clear and specific upon many other doctrines as they were upon this, but then it was a foundation stone and they were occupied in laying itand they did lay it and laid it thoroughlyand laid it forever. Still, they would have more fully completed the circle of revealed Truth if Sanctification had been as fully apprehended and as clearly explained as Justification. It had been well if the legs of the Gospel of the Reformation had been equal, for one was a little longer and a little stronger than the other and, therefore, there was a limpa halting like that of victorious Israel, as he came from Jabbokbut still a limp which it would be well to cure.

We have passed beyond the stage of dwelling too much on that cardinal doctrine and I greatly fear that in these times we do not have enough preaching of Justification by Faith. I could wish the Lutheran times back, again, and that the old thunders of Wittenberg could be heard once more. And yet I shall be glad if everything that is practical in the Gospel shall also have its full sphere allotted to it. The dutieslet me rather say, the high and holy privilegeswhich come to us as children and servants of Godthese should be maintained and fully preached, side by side with the blessed Truth of God embodied in those lines

*There is life in a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for you.*

I shall dwell, first of all, upon the first point of the text, which is this, Not of works, or,

the way of salvation. Not of works is a negative description, but within the negative there lies very clearly the positive. The way of salvation is by something other than our own works. Secondly, I shall speak about the walk of salvation. We who are saved, walk in holiness, for we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. It is a decree of the Sovereign Lord that His chosen should be led to walk in holiness!

I. First, then, THE WAY OF SALVATION is negatively described as, Not of works. To this many take exception, but that we cannot helpthe Scripture is plain enough. We are told that we ought not, on any occasion, allow persons to sing

*Sinner, nothing do,   
Either great or small,   
Jesus did it, did it all,   
Long, long ago.*

Great exception has been taken to that expression, but I believe that if the same Truth of God had been expressed in any other words, the same objection would have been raised, for it is the Truth that is objected to, rather than the words in which it is set forth! My text itself would be, to such persons, very objectionableNot of works. They are ready to rail at Paul for speaking thus evangelically. They hate the doctrine of salvation all of gift and not in the least of merita doctrine which we love! We preach salvation, not of works. We repeat the teaching again and again, and mean to repeat it continually till we die! Salvation is of the Lords mercy and not by works of the Law.

If we were to preach that salvation is of works, we should please many fine folk; but as we do not know that it would be at all to their benefit that they should be pleased, we shall not brush one hair of our head in a different way from that in which it grows, to please themmuch less shall we keep back, or explain away, the fundamental Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christand that for several reasons.   
If we were to preach to sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, that salvation would be by their own works, we should be setting aside the way of salvation by Grace. There cannot be two ways of salvation for the same people! If we take to the one, we practically deny the other. It cannot be questioned that a guilty man, if saved at all, must be saved through the mercy of God. It cannot be denied, also, that our Savior and His Apostles taught that we are saved by faith. A man must shut his eyes if he does not see this to be their teaching. If, then, I teach men that they can be saved by works, I have practically told them that salvation by Grace is a myth, a mistake, a mischievous error! I have set it aside, for, as I have said before, there cannot be two ways to Heaventhere cannot be more than one. If I set up the way of works, I shut up the way of Grace. If salvation is of merit, it is not of mercy! And if there is no salvation of men by the pure mercy of God, what an unhappy case are we in! To deny Grace is really to deny hope. Where, then, would there be any Gospel, or glad tidings, or good news?

The way of salvation by works is not news. It is the old way of mans devising which is the general and well-known error of all the ages. Moreover, it is not, good news, or glad news, for there is nothing good or glad in it. That we shall be rewarded for our works is nothing more than the heathens taught! Justification by religious performances and meritorious deeds is nothing better than the old Phariseeism with a Christian name stuck upon it! It is not worth revealing by the Spirit of God, for it is to be seen by the light of mans own candle. That doctrine makes the Lord Jesus Christ to be practically a nobody, for if salvation is of works, then the way of salvation through faith in our Savior is superfluous and even mischievous.

Next, to preach the way of salvation by works is to propose to men a way in which they have already failed. If you are to be saved by works, you must begin very earlyyou must begin before you sinsince one sin decides the matter. But already you have commenced to break the Law of God. I am not addressing persons who have yet to start upon the way, for they have started already. You are a good way on the road, one way or other, and since you began in the way of works, what a failure you have already made of it! Is there anyone here who can claim that he is already saved by works, as far as he has gone? Has anyone among you been without sin? Look at your lives! Examine your consciences! Observe your words, your thoughts, your imaginations, your motivesfor all these come into the account!

Is there a man or woman here that does good and sins not? Scripture declares that there is none that does good, no, not one. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way. The way of salvation cannot, therefore, be by following a road from which we have already so sinfully and steadily departed. If you were perfect as Adam was before he sinned, you might follow the way of works and be safebut you are not in that condition. If I could be sent to an Adam and an Eve altogether unfallen, I might propose to them the way of salvation by obedience to the Lawbut you have fallen and your nature is inclined to forsake the right way. The very garments that you wear show that you have discovered your shame. The daily labors which weary you prove that you are not in Paradise. The very preaching of the Gospel implies that you are in a sinful world! You are not possessed of an unbiased will, or inclined to that which is goodyou have chosen the evil and still continue to choose ittherefore I should only be proposing to you a road in which you have already stumbled. And I should be setting you a task in which you have already broken down.

And, next, I think it will be admitted by all, that the way of salvation by good works would be self-evidently unsuitable to a considerable number. I will take a case. I am sent for, in an emergency, and it is the dead of night. A man is dying, smitten suddenly by the death-blast. I go to his bedside, as requested. Consciousness remains, but he is evidently in mortal agony. He has lived an ungodly lifeand he is about to die. I am asked by his wife and friends to speak to him a word that may bless him. Shall I tell him that he can only be saved by good works? Where is the time for works? Where is the possibility of them? While I am speaking, his life is struggling to escape! He looks at me in the agony of his soul and he stammers out, What must I do to be saved? Shall I read to him the Moral Law? Shall I expound to him the Ten Commandments and tell him that he must keep all these? He would shake his head and say, I have broken them all; I am condemned by them all! If salvation is of works, what more have I to say? I am of no use here. What can I say? The man is utterly lost! There is no remedy for him. How can I tell him the cruel dogma of modern thought that his own personal character is everything? How can I tell him that there is no value in belief, no help for the soul in looking to Anothereven to Jesus, the Substitute? There is no whisper of hope for a dying man in the hard and stony doctrine of salvation by works!

If salvation had been by works, our Lord could not have said to the thief, dying at His side, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. That man could do no works! His hands and feet were fastened to the cross and he was in the agonies of death. No, it must be of Grace, allconquering Graceand the modus operandi must be by faith, or else for dying men the Gospel is a mockery! The man must look and live! The expiring sinner must trust the expiring Savior. As life ebbs out, the penitent must find life in Jesus death. Is it not clear that the Gospel of works is unsuitable in such a case as this? Now, a Gospel which is unsuitable to anybody is not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, I put it plainly. A Gospel that does not suit everybody does not suit anybodyand if it suits any class and condition really and truly, it must suit all classes! I think I have told you that, on one occasion, I had a letter which was intended to be very irritating to me, from some rather eminent, aristocratic gentleman who said that he had read some of my sermons when he was out on the coast of Africa and he found that certain black fellows out therecertain, niggersdelighted in them very much. He wrote to inform me that I was a very competent preacher for niggers.

I accepted the assurance at once as a very high compliment! I felt that, if I could preach to niggers, I could preach to anybody and that, if the Gospel that I preached was suitable to the natives on the coast of Africa, it would certainly suit the people in London! If those who are afar off could understand it, you, who are near, could also understand it! The Gospel was not sent into the world to be a patent medicine that could only be purchased by the wealthy, or a spell that could only be uttered by Latin scholars. It is a Gospel for all ranks and conditions of menand if I prove that what you call the Gospel is unsuitable for the dying, or is unsuitable for the ignorantit is NOT the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The Gospel of salvation by Grace, through faith, is suitable for every class of persons that we have to deal with! Sinful habit has bound in iron fetters many of our fellow citizens and the Gospel can free them! Be the habit drunkenness, or profanity, or what it may, the habit holds them fastand the Prophet says, concerning habit, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

To what purpose, then, do I cry to the leopard, Change your spots, or to the Ethiopian, Change your skin? I must bring a superior force to bear upon the leopard or the Ethiopian before this can be accomplished! And there is no force in mere exhortation. You may exhort a blind man to see as long as you like, but he will not see. You may exhort a dead man to live as long as you like, but he will not live through your exhortation! Something more is needed! The forces of natural depravity and the acquired habits of sin in many casesI think you will admit itput the doctrine of salvation by works out of court! And if out of court as to

one, it is gone as to all, for there can be but one Gospel. Go through your convict settlements. Go through your jails and just see what you can do with a doctrine of salvation by good works! You will come home disappointed, however earnest may be your address. But go there and tell of Free Grace and dying loveand pardon bought with bloodand eyes that stream with tears, confessions of sin and cries for pardon will tell you that you have not spoken in vain!

Further, dear Friends, if we go and preach salvation by works to men, we are preaching to them a way of salvation impossible to all because of the perfection of the Law. What are the good works that can merit Heaven? What are the good works that can ensure eternal life? These are not the easy things which some seem to imagine. They must be perfectly pure, continuous and unspotted. The Law of the Lord is perfect. It condemns a thought and even the glance of an eye, as an act of criminality. Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. The Law of God in 10 commands means much more than the bare words would implyit deals with the whole range of moral condition, motive and thought. Dream not that its sweep includes only external actsindeed, it does include externals, but, in very deed, the Ten Commandments are spiritual! They go right through the heart and search the inward parts of the spirit. The more a man understands the Law of God, the more he feels condemned by itand the less does he indulge the dream that he, as he is, shall ever be able to keep it intact. With such foul hands as ours, how can we do clean work? With hearts so polluted, how can we be undefiled in the way? Nature rises no higher than its source and that which comes out of the heart will be no better than the heart and that is, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

The Law of God is one and if you break it in any one point, you break it altogether. If, in a chain of 100 links, 99 should be perfect, yet if a single link anywhere in the chain should be too weak for the weight placed upon it, the load will fall to the ground quite as surely as if 20 links were snapped! One breakage of the perfect Law of God involves transgression against the whole of it! In order to be saved by works, there must be absolutely perfect, continuously perfect obedience to it in thought, word and deed. And that obedience must be rendered cheerfully and from the heartfor this is the heart of the first tableYou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Can you keep that? Vain-glorious man, have you measured your moral strength against requirements so great and yet so just? Have you proved yourself equal to the task?

Here is the heart of the second tableYou shall love your neighbor as yourself. Have you ever tried to do thatto love your neighbor as yourself? You have been a little kind and sometimes generous, but the standard of loving your neighbor as yourselfhave you ever reached to that? Has your charity been equal to your self-love? I do not believe that it has ever gone even half the way. Now, What things soever the Law says, it says to them who are under the Law, and if it says all this to you and you cannot answer to its demands, how can you hope that you shall live by it? When a man fails to keep the Law of God, it condemns him! And its penaltyin other words, its cursefalls on him as justly his due. He that is under the Law is under the curse. All that the Law has to say to you is You have broken me and you must die for it. Read the curses written in the Book of Deuteronomy and remember that all these are pronounced over your head

*Look to the flames that Moses saw,   
And shrink, and tremble, and despair.*

And again, dear Friends, if we preach salvation by works, we shall take the minds of men away from a sense of their great need. Here is a person who has a terrible disease. He can be cured. The knife must be used, but if, instead thereof, I lay down for him rules of cleanliness and of general hygiene, I may do him some sort of good, but meanwhile he will neglect the chief evil, his disease will spread and will become fatal. What am I to do, if I am a surgeon? Must I not impress him, first, with the conviction that a serious operation is required, and that it must be submitted to? All the rest will be proper enough and even necessary, in due time, but I must do nothing to take his mind away from the great master evil that is destroying his life!

The sinner must be told that he must be born again, that his nature is corrupt, that this corrupt nature must be destroyed, that a new nature must be created in himto all this his mind must be turned! He must be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. And if I stir him up to eternal action, with a view to his salvation by it, I shall be taking his thoughts away from the inward evil of sin which is the very essence of the matter! O Sirs, if you had committed an offense against the government of your country and were found guilty and condemned to die, my first business with you would be to entreat you to ask pardon of your queen! I might come into your cell and say that I would have you dressed more respectably; would have you read such a book, or learn such a scienceand this might be all very wellbut the first thing you need is to have the sentence of death repealed! I will exhort you, my dear Hearers, to do everything that is honest, right and good, but there is something needed even more than this! You need to be cleansed from sin by the precious blood of Christ. You need to be renewed in heart by the Holy Spirit and you must turn your thoughts to these things! You first and most of all need the Lord Jesus! Look to him, I pray you! I dare not exhort you to do this work, or to do that, lest I distract your mind from Christ.

The preaching of legal justification has no power over men . Congregations thus instructed are usually careless, worldly and devoted to carnal amusements. Those who hear about works feel as if they had now done enough and do not need to practice them. There is nothing in such doctrine to awaken anxiety, or move desire, or stir the depths of the soul. It has nothing Divine about it, nothing supernatural, nothing which can really raise the fallen, cheer the faint, or inspire the gracious. Without unction, life, or fire, a legal ministry is mere fiddling a tune to lame men, or setting forth a course of living action for a vault full of corpses. This point we know to be fact and, therefore, we shall not repeat the experiment.

I am afraid that if we began to preach salvation by works, we would encourage pride in some and create despair in others. Many would think that they had done pretty well, as compared with other peoplethey would, therefore, right speedily wrap themselves up in a false hope. But others, knowing that they had not done well, as compared with other people, would think that there was no hope for them and so would sit down in despair. What practical purpose could this serveto be making some more proud and others more wicked through the influence of despair upon them?

But the very worst matter is that it would be taking them away from Jesus. Our business, my Brethren, is to hold up Jesus Christ! To what end did He die if men could be saved by their own works? It was a superfluity that He should hang upon the Cross if our own merits can open a way of salvation. How could the great God permit and even ordain such a death if we could be saved by our own merits? Why that bloody sweat? Why that nailing of the hands and feet? Why that, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani? if, of yourselves, you can be saved? But it is not so! You cannot save yourselves by efforts of your own and, therefore, we have to come to you, shutting you up to only this one thingthat you must be saved by faith in Him whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sin! You need the love of God! You need the power of the Holy Spirit! You need to be quickened into newness of life! You need to be helped to run in the ways of righteousness! In a word, you need everything until you come to Christ and everything that you need you will find in Him, and in Him, alone.

Within yourselves there is nothing that you need. You may search, look and turn the dunghill of your nature over and over again, but you will never find the jewel of salvation there! That pearl of great price is in the Lord who assumed human nature, lived, loved, died and rose againthat He might redeem men from the Fall and all the sin consequent thereof. Oh, that you would look away from self once and for all! God forbid that the preacher should ever hold up anything else before you except the Crucified Savior, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, bidding men look and live!

To talk to unbelieving men about the possibility of salvation by their own works would keep them from eternal life. All that the life of nature can do will never suffice to produce a higher nature. Let the natural exert itself as it may, it will never rise to the spiritual! The best working horse does not, thereby, become a manthe best unregenerate man cannot, thereby become regenerate! There must be a new birthand that comes by faith not by works. To believe in Jesus is the entrance gate of the new life and there is no other door! If we, in any way, set you hunting about for another way, we shall cause you to miss the only one entrance and that will be to your souls eternal loss! As we dread this, we more and more resolve to hold up the Cross and the Cross alone, and again and again we cry, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. God forbid that by our essays upon virtue, or, the enthusiasm of humanity, we should distract you from hastening to the Lord Jesus, that He may give you rest, life and holiness! We want you to let your thoughts run, all of them, to Calvary and to that wondrous Person whose wounds upon the tree bleed healing for the wounds of sinand whose death is, for Believersthe death of the great evil power which once held them in bondage!

Thus much upon a topic which we shall never wear threadbare and which we shall always continue to insist upon while life or breath remains, because it will always be needed while sinners remain on earth needing salvation.

II. But now we come to this second most important part of the subject, namely, THE WALK OF SALVATION. Those who have believed in Christ and have been the subjects of the Spirits work, are now, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that they should walk in them. God desires that His people should abound in good works. It is His great objective to produce a people fit to commune with Himselfa holy people with whom He can have fellowship in time and in eternity! He wishes us not only to produce good works, but to abound in themand to abound in the highest order of them. He would have us become imitators of Himself as dear children, possessing the same moral attributes as the Father in Heaven possesses! Is it not written, Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect? Oh, that we came within measurable distance of this blissful consummation!

Note in the text, first, that there is a new creation. One of the poets said of old that, an honest man is the noblest work of God. That is not true unless we add to the word, honest, an emphatic spiritual sense. A Christian man, however, is the noblest work of God. He is the product of the second creation. At first, man fell and marred his Creators work, but, in the new creation, He that makes all things makes us new! Now, the objective of the new creation of our race is holiness unto the glory of God. You are not new-made in the image of the fallen Adam, but in the likeness of the second Adam! You are not new-created to sinthis cannot be imagined! The new creature sins not, for it is born of God. The new life is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.

The old nature sins and always will sin, but the new life is of God and it strives daily against the sin of the old nature and perseveres, and pushes forward towards everything that is holy, upright and perfect. Its instincts all run towards perfect holiness. The old nature does not care to pray, but the new nature prays as readily as we breathe. The old nature murmurs, but the new nature sings and praises God from an impulse within. The old nature goes after the flesh, for it is fleshly, but the new nature seeks the things of the Spirit, for it is spiritual! If you have been born again at all, you have been born unto holiness! If you have been new-created, you have been created unto good works! If this is not so with us, our religion is a mere pretence.

This new creation is in connection with Christ , for we read in the text, Created in Christ Jesus. We are the branches; He is the Vine out of which we grow! Your life and all your fruit-producing power lie in your union to Christ. You are not merely new-created, but you are created in Christ Jesus! It is not merely a change from a lower nature to a higher, but from separation from Christ to union with Him! What a wonderful thing that isthat you and I should not only be creatures in the world, but new creatures in Christ Jesus! Creatures we were in the first Adam, but our new creatureship is in the second Adam. Beloved, if you are what you profess to be, you are one with Jesus by that vital union which cannot be dissolvedand good works follow upon that union! Joined to Jesus by faith in Him, love to Him and imitation of Him, you walk in good works! Your creation to holiness is your creation in Christ Jesus. As you become one with the anointed Savior, His anointing ordains you to service and His salvation leads you into obedience. There cannot but be fruit on that branch which is vitally joined to that fruitful Stem, Christ Jesus, who did always those things which pleased the Father!

Our good works must flow from our union with Christ by virtue of our faith in Him. We depend upon Him to make us holy. We depend upon Him to keep us holy. We overcome sin by the blood of the Lamb. We reach after holiness by the constraining love of Jesus. Love to Christ is the impelling cause of putting away first, one evil, and then anotherand the energy enabling us to follow after one virtue and then another. Love to Christ burns like a fire in the breast that has conceived it and, as it burns, it makes the heart to glow and to become transformed to its own nature. You have seen a piece of iron put into the fire, all black or rusty, and in the fire it has gradually become red with heat and, as it has reddened, it has thrown off the scales of rust until, at last, it has looked to be, itself, a mass of fire. The effect of the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is to burn off the rust and scales of sin and depravityand we become pure love to God through the force of the love of God which takes possession of our being!

Moreover, that love moves us to patient imitation of Christ. Do you know what that means? The Imitation of Christ is a wonderful book upon the subject which every Christian should read. It has its faults, but its excellences are many. May we not only read the book, but write it out anew in our own life and character by seeking in everything to be like Jesus! It is a good thing to put up in your house the question, What would Jesus do? It answers nine out of 10 of the difficulties of moral casuistry. When you do not know what to do and the Law does not seem very explicit upon it, put it soWhat would Jesus do? Here, then, stands the caseby your creation in Christ you come to exhibit faith in Him, love to Him and imitation of Himand all these are the means by which good works are produced in you! You are created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Notice that creation unto these good works is the subject of a Divine decreeWhich God has before ordained that we should walk in them. This is Gods decree! Am I ordained to eternal life? Answer the other question Am I ordained to walk in good works? If I am ordained to good works, then I do walk in them and the decree of God is manifestly carried out in me! But if I make a profession of being a Christian, attend a place of worship and compliment myself upon my safetywhile I am living in sin then evidently there is no decree that I shall walk in good works, for I am living otherwise than that decree would have caused me to live. O Beloved, it is the eternal purpose of God to make His people holy! Agree with that purpose, with the freedom of your renewed will and with the delight of your regenerated heart! Concur in the will of God. Yes, vehemently desire, heartily pant after perfect holiness in the fear of God! Then may you, in the midst of severe struggles against temptation from outside and from within, fall back upon the decree of Predestination. Since it is Gods decree that, as being new-created in Christ, I should be full of good works, I shall be so despite my old nature and despite my spiritual weakness! The decree in the new creature of God will be carried out despite my surroundings, despite the temptations of my circumstances, despite the opposition of the devil. God has before ordained that we should walk in good worksand we shall walk in them, sustained by His holy Spirit!

So, then, dear Friends, these good works must be in the Christian. They are not the root, but the fruit of his salvation. They are not the way of the Believers salvationthey are his walk in the way of salvation. Where there is healthy life in a tree, the tree will bear fruit according to its kind. So, if God has made our nature good, the fruit will be good. But if the fruit is evil, it is because the tree is what it always wasan evil tree. The desire of men created anew in Christ is to be rid of every sin. We do sin, but we do not love sin. Sin gets power over us, sometimes, to our sorrow, but it is a kind of death to us to feel that we have gone into sin. Yet it shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the Law, but under Grace and, therefore, we shall conquer it and get the victory!

The outcome of our union with Christ must be holiness . What concord has Christ with Belial? What union can He have with men that love sin? How can they that are of the world, who love the world, be said to be members of the Head who is in Heaven, in the perfection of His Glory? Brothers and Sisters, we must, in the power of the text, and especially in the power of our union to Christ, seek to make daily advances in good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them, for walking means not only persevering but advancing. We should go from strength to strength in holinesswe should do more and do better. What are you doing for Jesus? Do twice as much! If you are spreading abroad the knowledge of His name, work with both hands! If you are living uprightly, seek to put away any relics of sin that abide in your character that you may glorify the name of God to the utmost.

And, lastly, this should be our daily exerciseThat we should walk in them. Good works are not to be an amusement, but a vocation. We are not to indulge in them occasionallythey are to be the tenor and bent of our lives. Oh, says one, that is a hard saying! Do you think so? Well, then, this displays and sets in clear light the first part of my subject. You see how impossible it is that you should be saved by these good works, do you not? But if you are savedif you have obtained a present salvation, if you are now a child of God, if you are now assured of your safety, I charge you, by the love you bear to God, by the gratitude you have to His Christgive yourself wholly to everything that is right, good, pure and just! Help everything that has to do with temperance, righteousness, truth and godliness! And let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

May the Spirit of God seal this sermon upon the hearts of His people, for Christs sake! Amen.   
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK238, 554, 537. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1829 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A CHRISTIAN   
NO. 1829

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 22, 1885, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON FEBRUARY 7, 1884.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.

THIS text is written by the Apostle as a reason why salvation cannot be a thing of human meritnot of works, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship. The for indicates an argument. It is a conclusive reason why salvation cannot be by our good works, because even when we have an abundance of the best of works, they are far more due to God than to ourselves! We, ourselves, in our saved condition, are the workmanship of God, and with each of us the argument holds goodNot of works, for we are His workmanship.

We are so completely the Lords workmanship that we are also styled a creation! We are created in Christ Jesus, and a creation cannot possibly be the creatures own worksuch a supposition would be absurd upon the face of it! It would be a misuse of language to speak of anything as creating itself. Whatever, therefore, we are in Christ Jesus is the result of Gods work upon us and cannot be the cause of that work.

Moreover, our good works, be they what they may, are the subjects of an ordinance of Godwhich God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Truly they are purposed by ourselves and our will and heart determine them, but far at the back of all this lies the Divine Purpose by which they were settled from of old. If good works are ordained, as well as the salvation of which they are the evidence, then the whole matter is of Divine ordaining and there is no space left to impute salvation to human works! The tree is not created by its fruit, for the fruit is created with the tree, and is one purpose for which the tree was created. Good works are not the cause of salvation, for they are the result of it and were contemplated as a result by God when He saved us. The argument deserves to be worked out at greater length, but we have not space for it now.

I want, at this time, to call your attention to four things in the text. And if you can carry in your minds eye the first creation, the making of Adam and what he was made forand where he was put when he was madeit will serve as a background to the picture of the second creation which I shall attempt to paint. I would dwell upon man as Gods workmanship in a still higher sense than by his first making. I would set him forth as created anew unto good works, which God has before preparedfor that is the word properly used in the new translationwhich God has before prepared that we should walk in them.

I. To begin, then, notice first, THE SINGULAR ORIGIN OF A Christian. Of all Christians, whether Jews or Gentilesof all Christians, even if they are the highest Apostles, like Paul, or the least of all the family of love, such as we may beas many as are truly saved and brought into union with Christ, they are the workmanship of God!

No Christian in the world is a chance production of Nature, or the outcome of evolution, or the result of special circumstances. By the Grace of God I am what I am, may be said by every man who is saved. To nothing can we ascribe the fact that we are in Christ except thisthat we are Gods workmanship. Of regeneration, we must say, once and for all, This is the finger of God.

The spiritual life cannot come to us by development from our old nature. I have heard a great deal about evolution and development, but I am afraid that if any one of us were to be developed to our utmost, apart from the Grace of God, we should come out worse than before the development began! Our flesh would be apt to produce, by evolution, something exceedingly brutish and devilish. Mr. Whitefield once raised a great outcry against himself by saying that man by nature was half beast, half devilI have never seen any reason why the description should be altered, but I have sometimes wondered which was the worse of the twothe devil in the man, or the beast in him!

As to spiritual life coming out of our unrenewed nature, it is impossible! Out of nothing comes nothing. There is no spiritual life in men dead in trespasses and sinshow, then, can life come out of them? Out of death, truly, there comes a something congruous theretohorrible are the forms of corruption that arise from the body in which death holds sway! But this is dissolution and destructionnot life. What the corruption of a human soul may be, I cannot attempt to say. Terrible as Hell must be, there is nothing in the Pit more awful than those who are in it. The lost, themselves, are more unutterably dreadful than any punishment that justice may have imposed upon them. Developed manhood, developed without any restraining influences, if it is shut up in vast numbers, must be a fermenting mass of hate, envy, malice, lust, cruelty and pride. Speak of evolutionhere it isWhen lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Darkness never begets light, filth never creates purity, Hell never yields Heaven and depravity never produces Grace.

But the point is that we are Gods workmanship. We are His workmanship from the very first. The first stroke that helps to fashion us into Christians comes from the Lords own hands. He marks the stone while yet in the quarry, cuts it from its natural bed and performs the first hewing and squaring, even as it is He who afterwards exercises the sculptors skill upon it. It was the Lord who first taught us our need of a Savior and gave us our sense of sinand our early trembling and our new desires. The faintest breath of spiritual life that was ever breathed by any one of us came from God Himself! We might almost use the same words concerning our new nature as the Psalmist used when he spoke of his body Your eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

We shall remain the Lords workmanship to the very last . The picture must be finished by that same Master hand which first sketched it. If any other hand should lay so much as a tint or color on it, it would certainly mar it all. God has commenced the character of His people after so marvelous a sort that no human mind, as yet, fully comprehends the full design of infinite love, for none know perfectly the matchless Character of Jesus, our Lord. It does not yet appear what we shall be. Since, then, we do not even know what we are to be, we cannot intrude into the work and take the pencil from the hand of the great Artist, and complete His designthe Author must be the Finisher of what He has begun.

This is very beautiful to remember and it should stir up all that is within us to magnify the Lord. If it is so, that from the first the Lord has worked all our works in us, what an amount of patience, what an amount of power, what an amount of skill, what an amount of love, what an amount of Grace has God spent upon us! I was surprised when I was told, the other day, by a friend, who was a maker of steel-plate engravings, how much labor had to be put into a finely-executed engraving. Think of the power that has cut lines of beauty in such steel as we are! Think of the patience that lent its arms, its eyes and its heartand its infinite mind to the carrying on of the supreme work of producing the image of Christ in those who were born in sin! Think of the skill which makes heirs of God out of heirs of wrath! It seemed impossible, when one said that, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham, but it is more than fulfilled in us!

Miracles of Grace have been worked upon us as many as the sands on the seashore. How graciously has the Lord endured our opposition to His gracious operations, never violating the freedom of our will, but making us willing in the day of His power! This is one of the greatest of the marvels. See how He has continued to work upon us, year after year, with final perseverance of undiminished love! How much more of power will still be needed and how much more of long-sufferingand how much more of careful wisdombefore we shall be perfect and complete? According to His riches in Grace will He deal with us and if that should not suffice, He will take a higher standard and treat us according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. This we know, that we shall certainly receive all that is needed for completion, for He that has begun a good work in us will perform it unto the day of Christ. Happy is it for us that we are His workmanship!

Now, ought we not, dear Friends, as far as the Lord has gone with us already, to bless and praise His holy name? Do you not think that it is becoming in all of us who know that God has been at work with us, to adore Him continually for what He has done? I know you sigh because a part of the picture still looks rough and incomplete. Consider that the Artist has not ended His labor upon that portion of us. Sanctification, in its practical issues, is not yet ended. But do not sigh so much over the incomplete part as to fail in rejoicing over that which is accomplished! Rejoice that a hand has been laid upon the canvas which is matchless even in its outlines and foundation colors! A hand, moreover, which was never yet known to throw away a canvas upon which it had once commenced a masterpiece! Remember to magnify His work. He who has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

One thing I would say to you who are Gods peopleif we are His workmanship, never let us be ashamed to let men see Gods workmanship in us. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. Let us be very much ashamed to let them see the remains of the devils workmanship in us hide it behind a veil of repentant grief! Christ has come to destroy itlet it be destroyed! Yet let your simple faith be known and spoken of, even though it is ridiculed by the wise men of the age who, by wisdom, know not God. Do not be ashamed of your confidence in your God at any time, even though men burst into a fit of laughter over it as if you must be raving madfor this, also, is Gods workmanship. Nothing that God has worked is unfit to be seen. Search from the summit of the highest Alp to the bottom of the deepest cavern and there is neither plant, nor beast, nor insect, nor even grain of dust which is not beautiful in its season.

I have heard foolish people half scream at the sight of some poor little insect, or frog, or lizardbut this is from lack of knowing more of the beauty of the creature which our great Father has formed. If these are quietly looked at, especially if they are examined under the microscope, they amaze us with the marvelous art displayed in them. Nothing that God has made should be despised. Assuredly this is most true in the spiritual kingdom where the lowest form of Grace is lovely as an angels countenance! All the new creatures of God are surpassingly beautiful and as far as you, my Brothers and Sisters, are Gods workmanship, so far are you comely with the comeliness which He has put upon you! Look how the Bridegroom in Solomons Song extols His bride, fair metaphor of the manner in which the Lord Jesus praises His Church! He is an impartial Judge of all that is excellent, but when He views His people as Gods work, He is full of admiration!

That which is your own work, you may well blush to acknowledge. That which is the devils work, you are bound to detest! But that which is the work of the Holy Spirit in you will bear inspection and no guilty fear should cause you to conceal it. Let your meekness, your kindness, your uprightness, your integrity, your purity appear unto all men. Never let it be a question whether you are a Christian. Do not tremble at the persecution which the enmity of the ungodly may inflict upon you because you belong to Christ, but rather accept it as an honor, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt!

As to any of you who hear me at this time and feel forced to say, Ah, me! I do not see how I am to be a Christianlet me speak with you. I am thinking of the matter very differently. I see very plainly how you can become Christiansfor all of us who are Believers are Gods workmanship and that God who has made us His workmanship can make you to be the same. Oh, but I cannot do anything! Who said you could? Who asked you to do any part of Gods work? We are Gods workmanship! There is, in your fallen nature, no power or will towards good and if the question were about your workmanship, the answer would be full of despair! But while God works, there is hope.

Oh, but I have a withered hand! When Jesus bids you stretch it out, do not enquire about your own power, but look to His power who gives the command! Do you say, I cannot save myself. I cannot make myself holy? Look, then, to Him who is a Savior, able to save to the uttermost, who was born for this end that He might save His people from their sins. We are His workmanship, cry all the saints! Do you want to be your own workmanship? He that can work upon one can work upon another. Oh, that you would lie at His feet! Oh, that you would put off all idea of what you can do for yourself and draw comfort from these few words of my text We are His workmanship! What is there that God cannot do for you? Rough material as you are, He can make you what you should be! He can make you what it will delight you to be! God grant that we may learn to look to the Strong for strength and no longer waste our time in enquiring for it where there is nothing but perfect weakness!

Here, then, is the origin of a Christianhe comes out of the workshop of God.   
II. Secondly, here in the text we see THE PECULIAR MANNER OF THIS ORIGIN. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. Created in Christ Jesus. Catch that thought. Our new life is a creation. This goes further than the former expression, for workmanship is less than creation. A man may produce a picture and say, This is my workmanshipa piece of mosaic, or a vessel fresh from the wheel may be a mans workmanshipbut it is not his creation. The artist must procure his canvas and his colors. The maker of a mosaic must find his marbles or his wood. The potter must dig his clay, for without these materials he can do nothing, for he is not the Creator. To One only does that august name strictly belong! None other could create a gnat, or the beam of light in which it dances, or the eyes with which it is seen.   
In this world of Grace, wherever we live, we are a creation. Our new life is as truly created out of nothing as were the first heavens and the first earth. This ought to be particularly noticed, for there are some who think that the Grace of God improves the old nature into the new. It does nothing of the sort! That which we possess since the Fall is corrupt and dead and to be buriedof which our Baptism is the type and the testimony. That which is of God within us is a new birth, a Divine principle, a living seed, a quickening Spirit! In fact, it is a creationwe are new creatures in Christ Jesus. What a sweeping statement! This goes back to the very beginning of Grace within us. As we read, In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth, so may we say of every man that is born again unto God, that he had no true beginning till God created him and made him to be spiritually. Creation is the calling of something out of nothing, of light out of darkness, of life out of death. Is not this a fair description of the new birth? Has not this happened to us? When we were nothing, God, in the greatness of His Grace, created us in Christ Jesus!   
Creation was effected by a word. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. He spoke, and it was done! He commanded, and it stood fast. God said, Let there be light: and there was light. Is not that, again, an accurate description of our entrance into spiritual light and life? Do we not confess, Your Word has quickened me? Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Lord breathed upon us by His Spirit and we livedHe spoke, and we were created in Christ Jesus.  
In creation the Lord was alone and unaided. The Prophet asks, Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor has taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding? After all was done, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joybut they did not could not aid in the work! Creation is the prerogative of Jehovah and none can share it with Him. So it is in the regeneration of a soul instrumentality appears, but the real work is immediately of the Spirit of God.   
See, then, poor Sinners who may hear these words, that they have a relation to you! You are saying, How can we become Christians? Why, you can become Christians by being createdand there is no other way! But we cannot create ourselves, says one. It is even so! Stand back and quit all pretence of being creatorsand the further you retreat from selfconceit the betterfor it is God who must create you! How I wish that you felt this! It would drive us to despair, you say. It might drive you to such despair as would be the means of your flying to Christand that is precisely what I desire! It would be greatly to your gain if you never again indulged a shred of hope in your own works and were forced to accept the Grace of God! I seek not to excite in you a proud activity, but a humble reliance on the mercy of God and a submissive acceptance of His plan of salvation by Free Grace. Oh, that this might be done!   
The Gospel does not call upon you to save yourselves, but its voice is the echo of that of the Lord in Isaiah 45:22, Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. The Lord does not even ask for your help in your own salvation. When He has worked in you, you may work it out, but that is all. Be ready to be as clay in the hands of the Potter, plastic to the touch of the All-Creating God, and you shall find that He is the God of salvation and to Him belong the issues from death! Out of black sinners He can make bright saints! Hearts of stone He can take away and give hearts of flesh. He can take the infidel and create in him a mighty faith; the harlot and make her a pattern of purity; the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vileand put them among the princeseven the princes of His people! Granted that a Christian is the result of a creation, then nothing is needed to begin with and no help is required in the processthe Lord can work and none can hinder Him. This Truth of God lifts the whole matter out of the region of the creatures merit, worth, or abilityand puts it on another footing, full of hope to man and of glory to God! I would be glad and rejoice forever in that which God createsit fills me with comfort for my fellow men and with reverence for my God.   
But the text speaks of this creation as, in Christ Jesus. This is a deeply instructive subject which, at this present time, cannot fully be discussed, partly from lack of time and partly from lack of ability, on my part, to fully open it up. It would require a series of discourses, such as Dr. John Owen, or Stephen Charnock might have been able to deliver. The theologians of today, if there are any, cannot come near it. Herein is a great deepcreated in Christ Jesus. This much, however, I may note, for it rises to the surface. In the first creation you and I were created in Adam. We wear the image of the earthly Adam by our natural descent and, as such, we are the creatures of God. It is of our natural birth that the Psalmist said, Your hands have made me and fashioned me. Thus we received our being and that is a blessing. But the blessing would have soured into a curse had not Jesus come to work our well-being! Creation in the first Adam has brought us into a world of miseryand to reach a better world, we require to be created in some such fashion that we come into union, connection and relationship with the second Adamthe Lord from Heaven.   
This is what the Lord does when He new-creates each BelieverHe creates him in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus is his federal Head and his Representativehis hope is hidden in Him. We are thus put under a new economy and are dealt with under a new system and order of things. I could tell you something more that I believe, namely, that when the glorious Jehovah created the Christ, as the Man, Christ Jesusand when the Godhead came into union with this human Nature of our blessed Lord, all of us were viewed as in Him. What says the Lord? In Your book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. That God saw you and me and all the redeemed in Christ from all eternity is a matter of faith to me.

And we were in Christ when He died, in Him when He rose and we are in Him even now that He sits at the right hand of God, the Father. Who can separate the Head from the members, or the members from the Head? We are regarded as one in the thought and acts of Jehovah! Beloved, there is a mystic unity between Christ and the twice-born, into which I will not further go. I point to a case which, just now, I will not unlock. But to return to the text, here is the glory of itfirst, we are Gods workmanship and the peculiar manner in which we have been created is that we have been created in Christ Jesus.   
III. We come, thirdly, to dwell upon THE SPECIAL OBJECTIVE OF THIS CREATIONunto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.   
When Adam was created, the Lord made him for His own Glory. This always was, and is, and must be the chief end of man. As soon as he was created, the Lord placed Adam in the garden. And what did He give him to do? He had only to enjoy himself, says one. I do not read such a statement in the Scriptures. He put him there, says another, that he might eat of every fruit that grew in the garden. Truly He did permit Adam, freely, to partake of all that Nature yielded, but God tells us, Himself, that He put Adam in the garden, to dress it, and to keep it. An occupation was found for Adam which would keep him always busy.   
A gardeners business is healthful and interesting, but it offers no temptation to idleness, for every season has its demandsand if the work is not kept well under hand, it is hard to overtake it again. That noble man who was the founder of our race, trimmed the vine and trained the tree! He uprooted the weed and planted the herb. Paradise, itself, required, to make it perfect, that a man should have something to do! Slavish drudgery involved by unreasonable hours is not of God, but of the cruel greed of man. Ill-remunerated toil, by which the worker cannot earn his daily bread, is the result of human tyranny, not of Divine purpose! But a fair share of healthy, useful labor is necessary for us all and, if ever this world becomes a Paradise, again, we shall have, each one of us, to pay either the sweat of our brow or of our brain as the price of our bread.   
When the Lord creates us the second time, in the second Adam, He does not make us that we may be merely comfortable and happy. We may enjoy all that God has given us, for of every tree of this garden you may freely eat, since in the Paradise into which Christ has introduced you, there is no forbidden fruit. You may eat and drink abundantly of heavenly food, but you are not created anew with so poor a purpose as only your pleasure! Around you is the garden of the Lord, and your call is that you may dress it and keep it. Cultivate it within; guard it from foes without. Holy labors await you! Good works are expected of you and you were created in Christ Jesus on purposethat you might be zealous for them. To you the great Father says, Son, go work today in My vineyard. He who died for you calls you to do works like His own. The Holy Spirit within you prompts you to consecration, urges you to diligence.   
And what are good works? In that question lies another large subject. Tell me, you who talk so much of good works, what are they? I should say that they are works such as God commandsworks of obedience. When we heartily keep the Divine precepts, we must be right, for it can never be evil for a man to do what God bids him.   
Next, I should say that they are works of loveof love to God and love to manworks done out of a pure affection to the great Father and out of unselfish regard to men. That which we do to display our own liberality is done unto self, and so is spoiled. But where there is a single eye to Gods Glory, the work is good. Works done out of love to Christ, love to saints, love to the poor and love to lost sinners are good works.   
Furthermore, I should say that works of faith are good worksworks done in confidence in Godundertaken in reliance upon His help and in the firm belief that He will accept them even though men might censure them. The proclamation of His Gospel with faith in its power, the pleading of the promise with expectation of its fulfillment, the sacrifice of personal gain for the service of the Truth of Godworks such as these are good and pleasing to Godfor without faith it is impossible to please Him.   
I am bound to add that good works include the necessary acts of common life when they are rightly performed. We are to produce good works in our home, in our shop, in our workplace, in our travel abroad, or on our sickbedeverywhere we are to be filled with good works to Gods Glory. All our works should be good works and we may make them so by sanctifying them with the Word of God and prayer, according to that precept, Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.   
Observe that God has not created us that we may talk about our good works, but that we may walk in them. Practical doing is better than loud boasting! God has not created us that we may occasionally perform good works, but that we may walk in themthat they may be so habitual to us that the common course of our conversation may be full of them. God has not created us that we may execute good works as a grand performance, but that we may walk in themnot that we may jump up to them, or seem to be walking on stilts and making a great display every now and thenbut that easily, naturally, out of a fully renewed heart, our newcreated spirit may display itself in good works! May God grant that His holy objective may be carried out in us to such a degree that our path may be luminous with holiness, that we may leave behind a shining track like that of a vessel upon the sea! Oh, that our way may be strewn with gracious acts, as when a cloud shines over a thirsty land and blesses it with silver showers!   
I have known in a certain village, a spot called, The Poets Walk, and another called, The Lovers Walk. Oh, that ours may be, The Christians Walk! May the good Lord perfect us in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight!   
IV. And now I close with this last head. Fourthly, THE REMARKABLE PREPARATION MADE FOR THAT OBJECTIVE, for so the text may be rendered, which God has prepared that we should walk in them.   
God has decreed the salvation of His peoplebut do not accept that statement as it is at times deliveredbut clearly understand what it means. The Lord has decreed everything and He has as much decreed the holy lives of His people as He has decreed their ultimate glorification with Him in Heaven! Concerning good works, He has before ordained that we should walk in them. If God has really and of a truth met with you in a way of Grace and worked upon you by His Spirit, and new-created you, then take it for certain that you are ordained to be a prayerful, godly, upright, sanctified man. The purpose is one and indivisiblethere is no ordination to salvation apart from sanctification!   
The Lord has not ordained any man to eternal life with the proviso that he may continue in sin. No, but He has ordained him that he shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus and then shall forsake his evil ways and walk in good works until that walk shall end in perfection before the Eternal Throne of God! Understand, then, that the walk of a Christian man is predestinated of God as much as the safety of a Christian! And so we, whom He has predestinated, are as eager to fulfill our holy destiny here as to enjoy our heavenly destiny hereafter. Foreordination to holiness is indissolubly joined to foreordination to happiness. Note that. Thus, in the Eternal Purpose, due provision is made for the good works of Believers.   
But, next, God has personally prepared every Christian for good works. Oh, some say, I sometimes feel as if I am so unfit for Gods service. You are not unfit, so far as you are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works! When God creates a bird to fly, it is the best flyingmachine that can be manufacturedindeed, none can equal it! If God creates worms to plow the soil and bring up the more useful ingredients to the surface, they are the best fertilizers under Heaven! Gods purpose is subserved by that which He makes, else were He an unwise worker. We are, in a special degree, Gods workmanship, created to this end, that we may produce good worksand we are fitted to that end as much as a bird is fitted to fly, or a worm is fitted for its purpose in the earth.   
Oh, says one, but I find it so difficult to walk in good works. Then you are not your true and real self. Pray God to put the flesh back and to let that dead and carnal part of you be gone! And ask that the new life, which He has infused, may have good scope to carry out its own natural instincts, for it is a holy thing, created on purpose to walk in good works, and it will do so if it is not hindered. Give it liberty! Give it opportunity! Feed it! Bring it before God to strengthen it and it must, it will, as certainly produce good works as a good tree brings forth good fruit! Spontaneous holiness comes forth from sincere piety. A pure fountain yields clear streams, it cannot do otherwise. The new nature cannot sin because it is born of God. He that has a clean heart will necessarily have clean hands. An impure sea casts up mire and dirt, but the river of the Water of Life, when it overflows its banks, deposits no mudit leaves sand of gold behind it!   
Once more, observe with content that everything around you is arranged for the production of good works in you. I do not see that, says one. But listen. When God made Adam, when did He make him? He did not create him till He had made a place for him to live. The great Fathers dear child could not be created until the garden had its roses blooming and its fruits ripening for him, that he might be delighted with them. When the Lord God created you in Christ Jesus, as you believe He did, He had prepared for you a position of service and usefulness exactly fitted for your capacity. That place, for the present, is the position which you now occupy. No, says one, but I am in the place of poverty. That is itit is Gods design that you may, in that place, produce the sweet fruits of contentment and patience!

Alas! cries another, I dwell among the ungodly. It is intended by your Lord that your light may shine among them and that you, having your Graces tried, may become all the stronger and the better Christian. Oh, says one, I am a Christian, but I believe that I am in the worst place that ever was. I am alone, like a plant in the desert. Is it not written, The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose? Full often the most advantageous place for our manhood is that which is surrounded with splendid difficulties! A soldier is trained by battles and a mariner by storms. What can a man do when he has everything to his hand? Everything is possible to him, but so it is to every simpleton! He is truly a man who has nothing to assist him and yet is aided by the opposition which confronts him. To sail against wind and tide would be more notable than to drift with gale and current. Is not he a true man who can turn to account the worst possible circumstances so as to produce the best possible results? He has an opportunity for distinguishing himself who is placed amid temptations and perils. In your life, good works are provided forGod has before prepared that we should walk in them.   
On the whole, you are placed in the best position for your producing good works to the Glory of God. I do not think it, says one. Very well. Then you will worry to quit your position and attain another footing mind that you do not plunge into a worse! The wise man says, as a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man that wanders from his place. It is not the box that makes the jewel, nor the place that makes the man. Oh, but anywhere rather than this! Yes, and when you get into the place you now covet, you will pine to be back again! A barren tree is none the better for being transplanted. A blind man may stand at many windows before he will improve his view. If it is difficult to produce good works where you are, you will find it still difficult where you wish to be! He who said that he leaped so many yards at Rhodes, was asked to do the same feat at homesurely the place could not take away his strength, nor give it to him!   
Oh, Sirs, the real difficulty lies not without you, but within you! If you get more Grace and are more fully Gods workmanship, you can glorify Him in Babylon as well as in Jerusalem! Were you placed within the outskirts of Perdition, you would glorify God if God has sanctified you. If you were called to walk through Pandemonium, you would startle it with a message from the Most High if the Spirit of God is truly within you. Your present possibilities are the best for this presentuse them as they fly! At any rate, rest assured that Divine Wisdom has not only prepared you for the hour, but the hour for you. All things are, in a Divine sense, your friends, For you shall be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.   
Moreover, the Lord has prepared the whole system of His Grace to this endthat you should abound in good works. Every part and portion of the economy of Grace tends toward this result, that you may be perfect, even as Your Father in Heaven is perfect. I long to be holythe Holy Spirit is given to be my Sanctifier. I desire to live near to Godthe Holy Spirit dwells in me and this is nearness of the highest order. Did I hear you sighI pine to know more of God? This precious Book is in your hands and its Author is among us, ready to expound it to you. Oh, but I agonize to conquer sin! This is not denied you, for it is written, This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.   
Another says, I yearn to be more like Christ. You are taken into communion with Christ on purpose that this may be. Looking at Him, you are changed into His image, from glory unto glory! Everything necessary for your holiness is to your hand in the Covenant of Grace. All the helps that you need in your pilgrim way are already placed along the sacred road. The Lord, in the Scriptural sense of the word, prevents you with the blessings of His goodness. All events, whether terrible or joyous, shall be made to work together for this highest form of good, namely, your sanctification! Januarys snow, Februarys cold, April showers, March winds, and July suns, all co-operate to prepare the wheat for the garnerand all earthly changes are sent of God to ripen us for the eternal future.   
Yes, I may even say that the glories of Heaven call us to a sublime life of holinessand the thunders of Hell urge us to conquer the temptations which are in the world through lust. The crown which Christ holds over our heads inspires us with ardor in our racewhile the Cross on which He died stirs us to a fervent enthusiasm for His praise. Nothing in Heaven, or on earth, or in Hell, rightly used, will excuse us in lukewarmness, but everything will impel us to intense zeal for holiness. Even the sin which so sadly abounds around us should make us the more watchful and careful in life. When dung is laid to the roots of the vine, it is not, thereby, defiled, but even out of the foul decay it finds nutriment with which to swell its delicious clusters! Thus, even the wickedness of man, by driving us nearer to our God, should prove a powerful motive for producing more exemplary lives in the midst of an untoward generation.   
Oh, Sirs, if God calls you His workmanship, take care that none can justly find fault with the Worker! If you are, indeed, Gods creation in Christ Jesus, take care that none despise the second birth, or the second Adam. And if it is so, that the Lord has before prepared all things that we may walk in good works, let us get into gear with Creationlet us be in harmony with Providencelet us keep step with the march of Gods Purpose. What more shall I say? I will only breathe a wish. Oh, that you who have not yet believed in my Lord Jesus would do so now! For, to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK181, 287, 222.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:   
DEAR FRIENDSI shall be right glad when the weekly sermon will be that preached in my own pulpit on the previous Lords Dayand I hope that such will be the case in two or three weeks! Still, I think the present sermon is somewhat better than those of an ordinary Sunday morning. I certainly enjoyed it much in preparing it for the press and I send it forth very hopefully, believing that God will feed His people with it. I cannot say that I am quite well, but I am progressing upon the whole and feel much rested and refreshed. Pray that I may soon get to workand may do so under a double anointing of the Spirit of God! I heartily thank some few friends who have sent help to Evangelists and Colportage, and I would not forget those who mean to do so soon.   
Yours ever heartily,   
*C. H. Spurgeon.*   
Mentone, March 14, 1885.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3472 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SOLEMN DEPRIVAL   
NO. 3472

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1915. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THIS METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. Without Christ.   
Ephesians 2:12.

WE shall have two things to consider this evening the misery of our past estate, and the great deliverance which God has worked for us. As for

I. THE MISERY OF OUR PAST ESTATE, be it known unto you that in common with the rest of mankind, Believers were once without Christ. No tongue can tell the depth of wretchedness that lies in those two words. There is no poverty like it, no need like it, and for those who die so, there is no ruin like that it will bring! Without Christ! If this is the description of some of you, we need not talk to you about the fires of Hell let this be enough to startle you, that you are in such a desperate state as to be without Christ! Oh, what terrible evils lie clustering thick within these two words!

The man who is without Christ is without any of those spiritual blessings which only Christ can bestow. Christ is the life of the Believer, but the man who is without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. There he lieslet us stand and weep over his corpse! It is decent and clean, and well laid out, but life is absent and, life being absent, there is no knowledge, no feeling, no power! What can we do? Shall we take the Word of God and preach to this dead sinner? We are bid to do so and, therefore, we will attempt it. But as long as he is without Christ, no result will follow, any more than when Elishas servant laid the staff upon the child there was no noise, nor sound, nor hearing. As long as that sinner is without Christ, we may give him ordinances, if we dare. We may pray for him, we may keep him under the sound of the ministry, but everything will be in vain! Till You, O quickening Spirit, come to that sinner, he will still be dead in trespasses and sins. Till Jesus is revealed to him there can be no life!

So, too, Christ is the Light of the world. Light is the gift of Christ. In Him was light, and the light was the life of men. Men sit in darkness until Jesus appears. The gloom is thick and densenot sun, nor moon, nor star appears, and there can be no light to illumine the understanding, the affections, the conscience. Man has no power to get light. He may strike the damp match of reason, but it will not yield him a clear flame. The candle of superstition, with its tiny glare, will but expose the darkness in which he is wrapped. Rise, Morning Star! Come, Jesus, come! You are the Sun of Righteousness, and healing is beneath Your wings. Without Christ there is no light of true spiritual knowledge, no light of true spiritual enjoyment, no light in which the brightness of the Truth of God can be seen, or the warmth of fellowship proved. The soul, like the men of Naphtali, sits in darkness and sees no light.

Without Christ there is no peace. See that poor soul hunted by the dogs of Hell? It flies swift as the wind, but far faster do the hunters pursue. It seeks cover yonder in the pleasures of the world, but the baying of the Hellhounds frighten it in the festive haunts. It seeks to toil up the mountain of good works, but its legs are all too weak to bear it beyond the oppressors rule. It doubles. It changes its tack. It goes from right to left but the Helldogs are too swift of foot, and too strong of wind to lose their prey! And till Jesus Christ shall open His bosom for that poor hunted thing to hide itself within, it shall have no peace!

Without Christ there is no rest. The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, and only Jesus can say to that sea, Peace, be still.   
Without Christ there is no safety. The vessel must fly before the gale, for it has no anchor on board! It may dash upon the rocks, for it has no chart and no pilot. Come what may, it is given up to the mercy of wind and waves. Safety it cannot know without Christ! But let Christ come on board that soul, and it may laugh at all the storms of earth, and even the whirlwinds which the Prince of the Power of the air may raise, need not confound itbut without Christ there is no safety for it.   
Without Christ again, there is no hope. Sitting wrecked upon this desert rock, the lone soul looks far away, but marks nothing that can give it joy. If, perchance, it fancies that a sail is in the distance, it is soon deceived. The poor soul is thirsty and around it flows only a sea of brine, soon to change to an ocean of fire! It looks upward and there is an angry Goddownward, and there are yawning gulfson the right hand, and there are accusing soundson the left hand, and there are tempting fiends. It is all lost! Lost! Lost! Without Christ, utterly lost, and until Christ comes, not a single beam of hope can make glad that anxious soul.   
Without Christ, Beloved, remember that all the religious acts of men are vanity. What are they but mere airbags, having nothing in them whatever that God can accept? There is the semblance of worshipthe altar, the victim, the wood laid in order, and the votaries bow the knee, or prostrate their bodiesbut Christ alone can send the fire of Heavens acceptance! Without Christ, the offering, like that of Cains, shall lie upon the stones, but it shall never rise in fragrant smoke, accepted by the God of Heaven. Without Christ your church attendance is a form of slavery, your chapel meetings a bondage. Without Christ your prayers are but empty wind, your repentances are wasted tears, your almsgivings and your good deeds are but a coating of thin veneer to hide your base iniquities! Your professions are white-washed sepulchers, fair to look upon, but inwardly full of rottenness! Without Christ your religion is dead, corrupt, a stench, a nuisance before Goda thing of abhorrence for where there is no Christ, there is no life in any devotion, nothing in it for God to see that can possibly please Him. And this, mark you, is a true description, not of some, but of all who are without Christ! You moral people without Christ, you are lost as much as the immoral! You rich and respectable people, without Christ, you will be as surely damned as the prostitute that walks the streets at midnight. Without Christ, though you should heap up your charitable donations, endow your almshouses and hospitals, yes, though you should give your bodies to be burned, no merit would be imputed to you! All these things would profit you nothing! Without Christ, even if you might be raised on the wings of flaming zeal, or pursue your eager course with the enthusiasm of a martyr, you shall yet prove to be but the slave of your own passion and the victim of your own folly! Unsanctified and unblessed, you must, then, be shut out of Heaven and banished from the Presence of God! Without Christ, you are destitute of every benefit which He, and He alone, can bestow.   
Without Christ, implies, of course, that you are without the benefit of all those gracious offices of Christ which are so necessary to the sons of men, you have no true Prophet. You may pin your faith to the sleeve of man and be deceived. You may be orthodox in your creed, but unless you have Christ in your heart, you have no hope of Heaven. Without Christ, the Truth of God, itself, will prove a terror to you! Like Balaam, your eyes may be open while your life is alienated. Without Christ that very Cross which saves some will become to you as a gallows upon which your soul shall die! Without Christ you have no Priest to atone or to intercede on your behalf. There is no Fountain in which you can wash away your guilt. No Passover blood which you can sprinkle on your lintel to turn aside the destroying angel. No smoking altar of incense for you. No smiling God sitting between the cherubim. Without Christ you are an alien from everything which the priesthood can procure for your welfare! Without Christ you have no shepherd to tend, no King to help youyou cannot call in the day of trouble upon One who is strong to deliver. The angels of God, who are the standing army of King Jesus, are your enemies and not your friends. Without Christ, Providence is working your illnot your good. Without Christ you have no Advocate to plead your cause in Heaven. You have no Representative to stand up yonder and represent you, and prepare a place for you! Without Christ you are as sheep without a shepherd. Without Christ you are a body without a head. Without Christ you are miserable orphans without a father, and your widowed soul is without a husband. Without Christ you are without a Savior what will you do? What will become of you when you find out the value of salvation at the last pinch, the dreary point of despair? To sum up all, you are without anything that can make life blessed, or death happy! Without Christ, though you are rich as Croesus, famous as Alexander and wise as Socrates, yet are you naked, and poor, and miserablefor you lack Him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, and who is Himself All-in-All!   
Surely this might be enough to awaken the conscience of the most heedless! But ah, without any of the blessings which Christ brings, and to miss all the good offices which Christ fillsthis is only to linger on the side issues! The imminent peril is to be without Christ, Himself. Do you see, there, the Savior in human formGod made flesh, dwelling among us? He loves His people and came to earth to wipe out an iniquity which had stained them most vilely, and to work out a righteousness which should cover them most gloriouslybut without Christ that living Savior is nothing to you! Do you see Him led away as a sheep to the slaughter, fastened to the cruel woodbleeding, dying? Without Christ you are without the virtue of that great Sacrifice! You are without the merit of that atoning blood! Do you see Him lying in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, asleep in death? That sleep is a burial of all the sins of His people, but without Christ your sins are not atoned for! Your transgressions are yet unburiedthey walk the earththey shall go before you to Judgment! They shall clamor for your condemnation. They shall drag you down without hope. Without Christ, remember, you have no share in His Resurrection. Bursting the bonds of death, you, too, shall rise, but not to newness of life, nor yet to glory, for shame and everlasting contempt shall be your portion if you are without Christ! See Him as He mounts on high! He rides in His triumphal car through the streets of Heaven! He scatters gifts for men, but without Christ there are none of those gifts for you! There are no blessings for those who are without Christ! He sits on that exalted Throne of God and pleads and reigns forever, but without Christ you have no part in His intercession and you shall have no share in His Glory! He is coming. Listen! The trumpet rings. My prophetic ear seems to catch the strain! He comes, surrounded by majestic pomp, and all His saints shall reign with Him! But without Christ you can have no part nor lot in all that splendor. He goes back to His Father and surrenders His Kingdom and His people are forever safe with Him. Without Christ there shall be none to wipe away the tears from your eyes. No one to lead you to the fountain of Living Waters. No hand to give you a palm branch. No smile to make your immortality blessed. Oh, my dear Hearers, I cannot tell you what unutterable abysses of wretchedness and misery are comprised here within the fullness of the meaning of these dreadful wordswithout Christ.   
At this present hour, if you are without Christ, you lack the very essence of good, by reason of which your choicest privileges are an empty boast instead of a substantial gift. Without Christ all the ordinances and means of Grace are worth nothing. Even this precious Book, that might be weighed with diamonds, and he that was wise would choose the Book and leave the precious stoneseven this sacred Volume is of no benefit to you! You may have Bibles in your houses, as I trust you all have, but what is the Bible but a dead letter without Christ? Ah, I would you could all say what a poor woman once said. I have Christ here, as she put her hand on the Bible, and I have Christ here, as she put her hand on her heart, and I have Christ there, as she raised up her eyes towards Heaven. But if you have not Christ in your heart, you will not find Christ in the Book, for He is discovered there in His sweetness, His blessedness and His excellence only by those who know Him and love Him in their hearts! Do not get the idea that a certain quantity of Bible reading, particular times spent in repeating prayers, regular attendance at a place of worship and the systematic contribution of a guinea or so to the support of public worship and private charities will ensure the salvation of your souls! No, you must be born-again! And that you cannot be, for it is not possible that you could have been born-again if you are still living without Christ! To have Christ is the indispensable condition of entering Heaven. If you have Him, though compassed about with a thousand infirmities, you shall yet see the brightness of the eternal Glory! But if you have not Christ, alas, for all your toil and the wearisome slavery of your religion, you can but weave a righteousness of your own which shall disappoint your hope and incur the displeasure of God!

And without Christ, dear Friends, there comes the solemn reflection that before long you shall perish. Of that I do not like to talk, but I would like you to think of it. Without Christ you may live, young manthough, mark, you shall miss the richest joys of life. Without Christ you may live, hale, strong man, in middle agethough, mark, without Him you shall miss the greatest support amidst your troubles! Without Christ you may live, old man, and lean upon your staff, content with the earth into which you are so soon to drop, though, mark you, you shall lose the sweetest consolation which your weakness could have found! But remember, man, you are soon to die! It matters not how strong you areDeath is stronger than you and he will pull you down, even as the stag hound drags down his victim, and then how will you do in the swellings of Jordan, without Christ? How will you do when the eyes begin to close, without Christ? How will you do, Sinner, when the death rattle is in your throat, without Christ? When they prop you up with pillows, when they stand weeping round your expiring form, when the pulse grows faint and few, when you have to lift the veil and stand disembodied before the dreadful eyes of an angry God, how will you do without Christ? And when the Judgment trumpet shall wake you from your slumber in the tomb, and body and soul shall stand together at that last and dread assizein the midst of that tremendous crowd, Sinner, how will you do without Christ? When the reapers come forth to gather in the Harvest of God, and the sickles are red with blood, and the vintage is cast into the winepress of His wrath, and it is trodden until the blood runs forth up to the horses bellieshow will you do, then, I ask you, without Christ? Oh, Sinner, I pray you let these words sound in your ears till they ring into your heart! I would like you to think of them tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Without Christ! I would like to make you think of dying, of being judged, of being condemned without Christ! May God in His mercy enable you to see your state and fly to Him who is able to save, even unto the uttermost, all them that come unto God by Him! Christ is to be had for the asking! Christ is to be had for the receiving! Stretch out your withered hand and take Him! Trust Him and He will be yours forevermore! And you shall be with Him, where He is, in an eternity of joy! Having thus reviewed the misery of our past estate, let us endeavor, with the little time we have left, to   
II. EXCITE THE THANKFULNESS OF GODS PEOPLE FOR WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE FOR THEM.  
We are not without Christ, now, but let me ask you, you who are Believers, where you would have been now without Christ? As for some of you, you mightindeed you would have been, tonight, in the alehouse or gin palace. You would have been with the boisterous crew that make merriment on the Lords Day. You know you would, for such were some of you. You might have been even worseyou might have been in the harlots house. You might have been violating the laws of man as well as the laws of God, for even such were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified. Where might you not have been without Christ? You might have been in Hell! You might have been shut out forever from all mercycondemned to eternal banishment from the Presence of God!   
I think the Indians picture is a very fair one of where we would have been without Christ. When asked what Christ had done for him, he picked up a worm, put it on the ground, and made a ring of straw and wood round it, which he set alight. As the wood began to glow, the poor worm began to twist and wriggle in agony, whereupon the Indian stooped down, took it gently up with his finger, and said, That is what Jesus did for me. I was surrounded, without power to help myself, by a ring of dreadful fire that would have been my ruin, but His pierced hand lifted me out of the burning. Think of that, Christians, and as your hearts melt, come to His table and praise Him that you are not now without Christ!   
Then think what His blood has done for you. Take only one thing out of a thousand. It has put away your many, many sins. You were without Christ and your sins stood like yonder mountain, whose black and rugged cliffs threaten the very skies. There fell a drop of Jesus blood upon it and it all vanished in a moment! The sins of all your days were gone in an instant by the application of the precious blood! Oh, bless Jehovahs name that you can now say   
*Now freed from sin I walk at large,   
My Saviors blood my full discharge!   
Content at His dear feet I lay,   
A sinner saved, and homage pay.*   
Remember, too, now that you have Christ, of the way in which He came and made you partaker of Himself. Oh, how long He stood in the cold, knocking at the door of your heart! You would not have Him! You despised Him! You resisted Him! You kicked against Himyou did, as it were, spit in His face and put Him to open shame to be rid of Him! Yet He would have you, and so, overcoming all your objections, and overlooking all your unworthiness, at length He rescued you and acknowledged you to be His own!   
Consider, Beloved, what might have been your case had He left you to your own free agency. You might have had His blood on your head in aggravation of your guilt! Instead of that, you have got His blood applied to your heart in token of your pardon! You know right well what a difference that makes. Oh, that was a dreadful cry in the streets of Jerusalem, His blood be on us and our children! And Jerusalems streets flowing with gore witnessed how terrible a thing it is to have Christs blood visited on His enemies! But, Beloved, you have that precious blood for the cleansing of your conscience. It has sealed your acceptance and you can, therefore, rejoice in the ransom He has paid and the remission you have received with unspeakable joy and full of glory!   
And I would not have you forget the vast expense which it cost to procure this priceless gift. Christ could not have been yours had He lived in Heaven. He must come down to earthbut even then He could not be fully yours till He had bled and died. Oh, the dreadful portals through which Christ had to pass before He could find His way to you! He finds you now right easily, but before He could come to you He must, Himself, pass through the grave! Think of that and be astonished!   
And why are you not left to be without Christ? I suppose there are some persons whose minds naturally incline towards the doctrines of free will. I can only say that mine inclines as naturally towards the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace. I cannot understand the reason why I am saved, except upon the ground that God would have it so. I cannot, if I look ever so earnestly, discover any kind of reason in myself why I should be a partaker of Divine Grace. If I am not tonight without Christ, it is only because Jesus would have His will with me and that will was that I should be with Him where He is and should share His Glory. I can put the crown nowhere but upon the head of Him whose mighty Grace has saved me from going down into the Pit!   
Beloved, let us mention one thing more out of the thousand things which we must leave unsaid. Remember what you have tonight now that you have Christ. No, no, no, do not be telling me what you have not got! You have not got a certain income, you say! You have not got a competence! You have not got wealth. You have not got friends. You have not got a comfortable house. No, but you have your Savioryou have Christ! And what does that mean? He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him, also, freely give us all things? The man who has Christ has everything! There are all things in one in Christ Jesus, and if you once get Him, you are rich to all the intents of bliss! What? Have Jesus Christ and be discontented? Have Christ and murmur? Beloved, let me chide you, gently, and pray you to lay aside that evil habit! If you have Christ, then you have God the Father to be your Protector, and God the Spirit to be your Comforter! You have present things working together for your good, and future things to unravel your happier portion! You have angels to be your servitors, both on earth and in Heaven! You have all the wheels of Providence revolving for your benefit! You have the stones of the field in league with you! You have your daily trials sanctified to your benefit! You have your earthly joys hinged from their doors and hallowed with a blessing! Your gains and your losses are alike profitable to you! Your additions and your reductions shall, alike, swell the tide of your souls satisfaction! You have more than any other creatures can boast as their portion! You have more than all the world beside could yield to regale your pure taste, and ravish your happy spirits! And now, will you not be glad? I would have you come to this feasting table this evening, saying within yourselves, Since I am not without Christ, but Jesus Christ is mine, I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice!   
And oh, dear Christian Friends, if you have lost your evidences, go to Christ to find them! Do not go striking your matches to light your candles, but go direct to the Sun and get your light from His full orb. You who are doubting, desponding and cast down, do not get to foraging up the moldy bread of yesterday, but go and get the manna which falls fresh today at the foot of the Cross! Now you who have been wandering and backsliding, do not stay away from Jesus because of your unworthiness, but let your very sins compel you to come to your Saviors feet. Come, you sinners! Come, you saints! Come, you who dare not say that you are His people! Come, you whose faith is but as a grain of mustard seed! Come, you who have not any faith at all! Come now to Jesus, who says, Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.   
May God grant that some who feel that they are without Christ because they have no enjoyment, nor any sense of communion with Him, may now take hold of His name, His Covenant, His promises, with a lively faith! No, moremay they find Him to the rapture of their souls and He shall have all the praise. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 50:14-23; Ezekiel 36:21-38.**

*PSALM 50:14-23.*  
In the first part of this Psalm, God has solemnly expostulated with His people as to the utter worthlessness of sacrifice and ceremony apart from living faith in Him, and holy life as its fruit. And He sums it all up in the searching question of the 13th verse, Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Have you such a groveling opinion of Me, your God, as to conceive that I am satisfied with these things? See what contempt the Lord pours upon sacrificeseven those that were of His own ordainingwhen men rested in them and made them their confidence and their end!

Verse 14. Offer unto God thanksgiving. This is what He wantsheartwork.   
14. And pay your vows unto the Most High. This is what He demands obedience.   
15. And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me. Thus you see God has spoken to His professing people to those who were moral, decent and observant of outward ritual. He now turns to some otherssome others, perhaps, quite as outwardly religious, but their lives were immoraltheir conduct was a breach of His Law. At first He speaks of their neglect of the First Table, which says, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and shows that it is not bullocks and rams which can make amends for forgetfulness of God. Now He turns to the Second Table and shows that no amount of sacrifice can make up for breaches of the Law of God as it touches our fellow men.  
16. But unto the wicked, God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth? Your unholiness, even though you were of the tribe of Levi, would disqualify you from declaring My statutes. Your mouth is full of slander, how could you dare to use it to speak of My Covenant with it?   
17. Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My Words behind you. As if they were worthless things to be thrown awayas if they were obnoxious things to be thrown behind your back where you could not see them. Do you talk about worshipping Me, while you are neglecting My Words? Now it is a very solemn thing when a man boasts about the Covenant, or about the Doctrines of Grace, or about outward ceremonies, and yet there are parts of Gods Word that he neglectsthere are portions of Gods will that he dares not look in the face. If ever I meet a text that I am afraid of, I begin to be afraid of myself! And if I feel any tendency to take away from a text any of its swooping charges or its strong demands, I feel that surely I must have quarreled with this text because it has quarreled with me. How can we think we are offering to God acceptable sacrifice when any of His Words are cast behind our backs?   
18. When you saw a thief, then you consented with him, and have been partaker with adulterers. When you saw a thief you consented with him, and some professors do this. If they do not themselves, rob, there are some who will employ their clerks to tell lies in writing. They consent in the bad trade of others. They become accomplices, helping to make excuses for others. And have been partaker with adulterers. Can a man profess to be religious and yet do this? Well, I have known such, and such will still creep into the Church of Godunclean, unchaste men, who nevertheless will come and sit as Gods people sit, and sing as Gods people sing! And, indeed, anyone who listens to lascivious talk, or who smiles at an unchaste jest, is himself a partaker with adulterers more or less.   
19. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. How many do this, and yet think they are the children of God? They ruin other characters most remorselesslythey will spread false reports, if not actually invent themand yet think themselves the people of God!   
20. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mothers son. When a tongue has once learned the habit of calumny, it will spare none. The nearest relative and the dearest will become victims to the habitfirst of gossip and afterwards of actual detraction and lying! Oh, the misery, the pain that is caused in the world by this habit which is so rife! And can we imagine ourselves to be the people of God when we delight in repeating false stories about others? Have we forgotten the Truth of that word, All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone? As surely as God is true and loves truth, if we love lies, where God is we can never come. It matters not how much we may pretend to have reverence for God, and to have an experience of His Truthwe are not of the Truth of God, neither are we of God.   
21. These things have you done, and I kept silent. God, in His longsuffering, bears with these sinners. You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself. These men came at last to say, Pooh! The Prophets make too much fuss about holiness! You can serve God, and yet, after all, live as we do. So long as we give God a tithe, it matters net how we get our property. If we offer Him the bulls, He will be quite content. Ah, to what do men degrade their God! Some made Him of old to be like a bull that has horns and hoofs, but many men nowadays think God to be like themselvesand that is worse!   
21. You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes. I will lay your sins out before youparcel them out, Item thisItem that. I will classify them: I will set them like a dreadful army in array before you. I will let you see that though I had patience with you, I was neither blind nor deaf, but heard and saw all that you have done and noted it all. Oh, what a vista this opens up for unholy professorsfor ungodly members of Christian churches!   
22. Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. What solemn words! What dreadful words! God never plays at threats and His ministers, when they speak of wrath to come, are not to speak with velvet mouths and soft words, for Oh, the wrath to come, as George Whitefield used to say with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, The wrath to come! The wrath to comehow dreadful will it be! God Himself proves it. Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver. And then the Psalm finishes up with this kind word of gracious address which drops like raindrops out of the bosom of the tempest that went before   
23. Whoever offers praise glorifies Me. More than he that offers bullocks.   
23. And to Him that orders his conversation arightThe man that strives in the sight of God to walk a holy lifethis is the man to whom   
23. Will I show the salvation of God. If he needs saving, let him order his conversation as he may, he will owe all to Sovereign Grace! He will have no merit of his own, but where I by Grace, says the Lord, lead a man to order his conversation aright, there will I show more and more fully, and at last perfectly in him, the salvation of God.

*EZEKIEL 36:21-38.*   
The Prophet had been bringing many heavy charges against Gods people. He had been thundering out the most tremendous threats against them. God was angry with them on account of sin. The Chapter is full of dreadful utterances, enough to make one tremble as he reads them. But all of a sudden the note altogether changes and the Prophet of Thunder becomes the Prophet of Consolation! Free Grace follows like a clear shining after the rain.

Verses 21-28. But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the LORD GODI do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy names sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Here, indeed, is matchless Divine Grace, that these very people who for their sins were banished from their land, and who in their exile added to their sin by the way in which they blasphemed Godthose very people are to be brought back and the mercy of God is so to be displayed in them that, in the very people who blasphemed Gods name, God shall be had in honor!

25, 26. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Now notice that all this was spoken to persons who had no desire for these blessings! If they had had a desire for them, their hearts could not be considered to be stony, but they were set against Godthey were His enemiesand yet He makes this solemn declaration in the Sovereignty of His Grace that He will give them a new heart and a right spirit! There may be some in this house, tonight, and I pray there may, who are strangers to the God of Israel, who, if they know anything concerning His Son, only know enough to oppose Him. May Gods eternal Omnipotence work in them mightily that a new heart and a right spirit may be given them tonight according to that ancient Word of God, I am found of them that sought Me not. He can come and make them a people that were not a people. Oh, that His Grace would do so now!

27. And I will put My Spirit within you. Not only a new spirit, but My Spirit. God Himself shall come and dwell in those hearts which once were a receptacle for the devil!

27, 28. And cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God. He who talks in this Sovereign way is God Himself! He first made the world as He pleased, and in the second New Creation, He does as He will, having power over us as the potter has over his clay. This is promised to the Jewish people, but it is also fulfilled in multitudes of others where God, in the same Sovereign way, works out the purposes of His love.

29. I will also save you from all your uncleanness and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. Temporal mercies shall follow where spiritual mercies are given.

30-36. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord GOD, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built up and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD built up the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Prayer will always go with the Divine working. Where God means to save, He sets men praying. Those who are saved intercede for others, and others who as yet are unsaved feel the need of the blessing and begin to cry for itand the blessing comes! As the black cloud forebodes the shower, so does the gathering spirit of prayer always foretoken the coming blessing! Heaven and earth may pass away, but the memorial of Jehovah always is The God who hears prayer. He is the God whose arm is always moved by the prayer of man. Did not Moses stand between them and vengeance, so that God said, Let Me alone, as if He had said, I cannot destroy them while you pray? Did not Elijah open and shut the windows of Heaven by his prayer? Nothing is impossible to those who know how believingly to enquire of God.

37. Thus says the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. Take up this promise, members of this Church, and urge it before God that He would give us not few additions, but many, very many! I will increase them with men like a flock.

38. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts. When a great number of lambs would be brought up to Jerusalem for them to keep the Passover with, a great and countless company. Oh, that such additions may be given to the Church!

38. So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the LORD.   
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OUR GLORIOUS TRANSFORMING   
NO. 3496

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1916.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1871.

But now in Christ Jesus, you, who sometimes were far off, are made near by the blood of Christ.   
Ephesians 2:13.

I DO not want you to feel at this time as if you were listening to a sermon, or to any sort of set discourse, but rather I should like, if it were possible, that you should feel as if you were alone with the Savior and were engaged in calm and quiet meditation. I will try to be the prompter, standing at the elbow of your contemplation, suggesting one thought and then another, and I pray, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as many of you as are truly in Him, that you may be able to meditate as to be profited and to say at the close, My meditation on Him was sweet. I will be glad in His name. There are three very simple things in the text. The first is what we were. Some time ago we were far off. But secondly, what we arewe are made near. And then there is the how, the means of this great change. It is in Christ Jesus, and it is added, by the blood of Christ. First, then, let us with humility consider, as Believers

I. WHAT WE WERE.   
There was a day when we passed from death unto life. All of us who are children of God have undergone a great and mysterious changewe have been new-created, we have been born-again. If any of you have not experienced this great change, I can only pray that you may. But you will not be likely to take much interest in the theme of our meditation this evening. As many of you as have experienced this great change are now asked to remember what you were. You were far off, first, in the respect that you were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The Jew was brought near. The Jewish people were favored of God with light, while the rest of the world remained in darkness. To them He gave the oracles. With them He made a Covenant. But as for the rest of the nations, they were left unclean and far off. They could not come near to God. This was our condition. We were Gentiles. We had no participation in the Covenant that God had made with Abraham. We had no share in the sacrifices of Aaron or his successors. We could not come in by the way of circumcision. We were not born after the flesh and we had no right to that fleshly Covenant, however great its privileges. We are brought near now. All that the Jew ever had we have. We have all his privileges and more! He had but the shadowwe have the substance. He had but the type we have the reality. But before our rebirth we had neither shadow nor substancewe were afar off and had no participation in them!   
And, Beloved, when we think of our distance from God, there are three or four ways in which we may illustrate it. We were far off from God, for a vast cloudland of ignorance hung between our souls and Him. We were lost as in a tangled forest in which there was no pathway. We were like some bird drifted out to sea that would be bereft of the instinct which guides it on its course, driven to and fro by every wind, and tossed like a wave by every tempest! We knew not God, neither did we care to know. We were in the dark with regard to Him and His Character. And when we did make guesses concerning God, they were very wide of the truth and did not help to bring us at all near. He has taught us better nowHe has taught us to call Him, Father, and to know that He is Love. Since we have known God, or, rather, have been known of God, we have come near, but once our ignorance kept us very far off. Worse than that, there was between us and God a vast range of the mountains of sin. We can measure the Alps, the Andes have been scaled, but the mountains of sin no man has ever measured! They are very high. They pierce the clouds. Can you think of the mountains of your sin, Beloved? Reckon them all up since your birthsins of childhood, youth, manhood and riper yearsyour sins against the Gospel, and against the Law of God, sins with the body and sins with the mind. Sins of every shape and formah, what a mountain range they make! And you were on one side of that mountain and God was on the other. A holy God could not wink at sin, and you, an unholy being, could not have fellowship with the thrice Holy God! What a distance!an impassable mountain separated you from your God. It has all gone now. The mountains have sunk into the sea, our transgressions have all gone, but oh, what hills they were, once, and what mountains they were but a little while ago! In addition to these mountains, there was, on the other side nearest to God, a great gulf of Divine Wrath. God was angry, justly angry, with us. He could not have been God if sin had not made Him angry. He that plays with sin is very far from knowing anything of the Character of the Most High. There was a deep gulf. Ah, even the lost in Hell know not how deep it is. They have been sinkingbut this abyss has no bottom. Gods love is Infinite. Who knows the power of Your anger, O Most High? It is all filled, now, as far as we are concerned. Christ has bridged the chasm. He has taken us to the other side of itHe who brought us nearbut what a gulf it was! Look down and shudder. Have you ever stood on a glacier and looked down a crevasse, and taken a great stone and thrown it down, and waited till at last you heard the sound as it reached the bottom? Have not you shuddered at the thought of falling down that steep? But there you stood but a little while ago, an heir of wrath, even as others! So the Apostle puts it, even as others. Oh, how far off you were!  
Nor was this all, for there was another division between you and God. When, dear Friends, we were brought to feel our state and to have some longings after the Most High, the mountains of sin had been moved and the chasm of wrath been filled, yet there remained another distance of our own making. There was a sea of fear rolling between us and God. We dared not come to Him! He told us He would forgive, but we could not think it true! He said that the blood would cleanse usthe precious blood of the Atoning Sacrificebut we thought our stains too crimson to be removed! We dared not believe in the Infinite Compassion of our Father! We ran from Himwe would not trust Him. Do you not remember those times when to believe seemed an impossibility, and salvation by faith appeared to be as difficult a thing as salvation by the works of the Law? That sea has gone away now! We have been ferried over its streams. We have no fear of God, now, in the form of trembling, slavish fearwe are brought near and say, Abba Father, with an untrembling tongue! You see, then, something of the distance there was between us and God. But I will illustrate it in another way. Think of God a moment. Your thoughts cannot reach HimHe is infinitely purethe heavens are not clean in His sight and He charges His angels with folly. That is one side of the picture. Now look at yourself, a worm that has rebelled against its Creator, loathsome with sin, through and through defiled! When I see a beggar and a prince stand together, I see a distance, but ah, it is but an inch, a span, compared with the infinite leagues of distance in character and nature between God and fallen man! Who but Christ could have lifted up from so low an estate to so high a condition from fellowship with devils to communion with Jehovah, Himself? The distance was inconceivable! We were lost in wonder at the greatness of the love that made it all vanish. We were afar off.

Now I have stated that very simply. Think it over a minute. And what do you feel as the result of your thought? Why, humility rises! Suppose you are a very experienced Christian and a very intelligent reader of the Bible. Suppose that for many years you have been able to maintain a consistent character. Ah, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, you have nothing of which to glory when you recollect what you were, and what you would have been if it had not been for Sovereign Grace! You, perhaps, have forgotten a little that you were just what the Bible says. You have been so contemplating your present privileges that you have, for a while, failed to remember that it is only by the Grace of God that you are what you are! Let these considerations bring you back to your true condition. And now with lowly reverence at the foot of the Cross bow down your soul and say, My Lord, between me and the greatest reprobate there is no difference but what Your Grace has made. Between me and lost souls in Hell there is no difference except what Your Infinite Compassion has deigned to make. I humbly bless You, and adore You, and love You because You have brought me near.   
Now we shall continue our contemplation, and take the second point. We have a bitter pill in this first one, but the next consideration kills it, takes the bitterness away and sweetens it! It is   
II. WHAT WE AREWHAT WE ARE.   
We are made near through the blood of Christ. You will please observe that the Apostle does not say, We hope we are. He speaks positively, as every Believer should. Nor does he say, We shall be. There are privileges reserved for the future, but here he is speaking of a present blessing, which may be now the object of distinct, definite knowledge, which ought to be, indeed, a matter of present experimental enjoyment. We are brought near. What does he mean by this? Does not he mean, first, what I have already said, that as we were far off, being Gentiles, and not of the favored commonwealth of Israel, we are now brought near, that is to say, we have all the privileges of the once favored race? Are they the seed of Abraham? So, are we, for he was the father of the faithful and we, having believed, have become his spiritual children. Had they an altar? We have an Altar of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. Had they a high priest? We have a High Priestwe have One who has entered into Heaven! Had they a sacrifice and paschal supper? We have Christ Jesus, who, by His one offering, has forever put away our sin and who is today the spiritual meat on which we feed. All that they had, we have, only we have it in a fuller and clearer sense! The Law of God was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ, and they have come to us. But we are brought a great deal nearer than the Jewthan most of the Jews werefor you know, Brothers and Sisters, the most devout Jew could not offer sacrifices to God. I mean, as a rule. Prophets were exceptions. They could not offer sacrifices, themselvesthey could bring the victim, but there were some special persons who must act as priests. The priest came near to God on the behalf of the people. Listen, O you children of God, who were once afar off! It is the song of Heaven! Let it be your song on earthYou were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood, and have made us priests and kings. We are all priests if we love the Savior! Every Believer is a priest! It is for him to bring his sacrifice of prayer, and thanksgiving, and come in, even into the Holy Place in the Presence of the Most High! And I might say more, for no priest went into the Most Holy Place of all, save one, the high priest, and he, once a year, not without blood and not without smoke and incense, ventured into the Most Holy Place. But we, Brothers and Sisters, see the veil taken right away and we come up to the Mercy Seat without the trembling which the high priest felt of old, for we see the blood of Jesus on the Mercy Seat and the veil rentand we come boldly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain Grace to help in time of need! Oh, how near we arenearer than the ordinary Jew! Nearer than the priestas near as the High Priest, Himself, for in the Person of Christ we are where He is, that is, at the Throne of God! Let me say, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we are near to God today, for all that divides us from God is gone. The moment a sinner believes, all that mountain of sin ceases to be. Can you see those hillsthose towering Andes? Who shall climb them? But lo, I see One come who has the scars of one who has died upon a cross! I see Him hold up His pierced hands and one drop of blood falls on the hills, and they smokethey dissolve like the fat of rams! They burn to vapor, and they are gone! There is not so much as a vestige of them left. Oh, glory be to God, there is no sin in Gods Book against the Believer! There is no record remainingHe has taken it away and nailed it to His Cross and triumphed in the deed. As the Egyptians were all drowned in the sea, and Israel said, The depths have covered them; there was not one of them left, so may every Believer say, All my sin is gone, and we are pure, accepted in the Beloved, justified through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Oh, how glorious this nearness is when all distance is gone!   
And now, Brothers and Sisters, we are near to God, for we are His friends. He is our mighty Friend and we love Him in return. Better than that, we are His children. A friend might be forgotten, but a childa fathers heart yearns towards him. We are His children. He has chosen us that we may approach Him, that we may dwell in His courts and abide, and go no more out forever. The servant abides not in the house forever, but the son abides always. And this is our privilege. And yet even more than that. Can anybody here imagine how near Jesus Christ is to God? So near are we, for that is the Truth of God which the little verse sings *So nearso very near to God,   
More near I cannot be!   
For in the Person of His Son   
I am as near as He!*   
If we are, indeed, in Christ, we are one with Himwe are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, and He has said, Where I am, there shall also My servants be, and He has declared that we shall receive the Glorythe Glory which He had with the Father before the world was. What nearness is this!   
Now I have stated that Truth of God, I want you now to feed on it for a minute and draw the natural conclusions, and feel the fit emotion. Beloved, if you are brought so near to God, what manner of lives ought you to lead? Common subjects ought never to speak traitorous words, but a member of the Privy Council, one who is admitted to the Court, should certainly be loyal through and through! Oh, how we ought to love God who has made us near!a people near unto Him. How ought heavenly things and holy things to engross our attention! How joyously we ought to live, too, for with such high favors as these it would be ungrateful to be unhappy! We are near to God, Brothers and Sisters. Then God sees us in all thingsour heavenly Father knows what we have need ofHe is always watching over us for good. We are near to Himlet us pray as if we were near God. There are some prayers that are dreadful from the distance there is evidently in the mind of the offerer. Too generally liturgies are addresses to a God too far off to be reached, but the humble familiarity which boldly comes trembling with fear, but rejoicing with faith, into the Presence of Godthis becomes those who are made near! When a man is near a neighbor whom he trusts, he tells him his griefs, he asks his help. Deal thus with God! Live on Him, live for Him, live in Him! Be never distant from a God who has made you near unto Himself. Our life ought to be a heavenly one, seeing that we are brought near to Godthe God of Heaven! Brothers and Sisters, how assured every one of us may be of our safety if we are, indeed, Believers in Christ, for if we are made near by love and friendship to our God, He cannot leave us! If, when we were enemies, He brought us near, will He not keep us, now He has made us friends? He loved us so as to bring us up from the depths of sin when we had no thoughts, nor desires towards goodand now He has taught us to love Him and to long for Him, will He forsake us? Impossible! What confidence this Doctrine gives!   
And once more, dear Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord has brought us near, what hope we ought to have for those who are farthest off from God today! Never be you among that pharisaical crew who imagine that fallen women or degraded men cannot be uplifted again! You were sometimes far off, but He has made you near. The distance was so great in your case that surely, He who met that can also meet the distance in another case! Have hope for any who can be brought under the sound of the Gospel! And labor on until the more hopeless, the most hopeless are brought there! Oh, let us gird up our loins for Christian work, believing that if God has saved us, there remain no hurdles! The chief of sinners was saved years ago. Paul said so. He had no mock modesty. I believe he said the truth. The chief of sinners has gone through the gate into Heaven and there is room for the second worst to get throughthere is room for you, Friend, as there is room for me. The God that brought me near has taught me to know that no man is beyond the reach of His Grace. But I must leave that with you, hoping that it will flavor all your thoughts tonight. Once more. The last thing we are to consider is   
III. HOW THE GREAT CHANGE WAS WORKED.   
We were put into Christ and then through the blood we were made near. The Doctrine of the Atonement is no novelty in this house. We have preached it oftenno, we preach it constantlyand let this mouth be dumb when it prefers any other theme to that old, old story of the Passion, the Substitution and consequent Redemption by blood! Beloved, it is the blood of Jesus that has done everything for us! Our debts Christ has paid, therefore, those debts have ceased to be. The punishment of our sin Christ has borne and, therefore, no punishment is due to us. Substitution has met a case that is never to be met by any other means. The Just has suffered for the unjust to bring us to God! We deserved the sword, but it has fallen upon Him who deserved it not, who voluntarily placed Himself in our place, that He might give compensation to Justice and full liberty to Mercy. It is by the blood that we are brought near, then! Christ has suffered in our place and we are, therefore, forgiven. But think about that blood a minute. It means sufferingit means a life surrendered with agony! Sufferingwe talk about it, ah, but when you feel it, then you think more of the Savior. When the bones ache, when the body is racked, when sleep goes from the eyelids, when the mind is depressed, when the head turns, ah, then we say, My Savior, I see a little of the price that redeemed me from going down into the Pit. The mental and physical suffering of Christ are both worthy of our consideration, but depend upon it, His souls sufferings were the soul of His sufferings! And when we are under deep depression, brought near even unto death with sorrow, then again we think of how the Savior bought us. The early Church was noted in its preaching for preaching facts. I am afraid now that we are too noted for forgetting facts and preaching Doctrine! Let us have Doctrine, by all means, but after all, the fact is the great thing. When Paul gave a summary of the Gospel which he tried to preach, he said, This is the Gospel that I have preachedthat Jesus Christ was crucified, died, was buried, rose again. There in Gethsemane, where bloody sweat soaked the soil. There on the pavement, where the lash tore again and again into those blessed shoulders till the purple streams gushed down, and the plowers made their furrows, and the blood filled them. There when they hurled Him on His back to the ground and fasten His hands to the wood with rough nailsthere when they lifted Him up and dislocated His bones when they fix the Cross into the earth. There where they sit and watch Him, insult His prayers and mock His thirst while He hangs naked to His shame in the midst of a ribald crew. There where God, Himself, forsakes Him, where Jehovah turns His face away from Him, where the Sufferer shrieks in agony, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?there it is that we were brought near, even we that were far off. Adore your Savior, my Brothers and Sistersbow before Him. He is not here, for He is risen, but your hearts can rise and you can bow at His feet. Oh, kiss those wounds of His! Ask that by faith you may put your finger into the print of His nails and your hand into His side! Be not faithless, but believing, and let all your sacred powers of mind assist your imagination and faith to realize, now, the price with which the Savior brought you from an intolerable bondage! God grant you Grace to feel something of this.

I have laid the Truth of God before you. Now sit down and quietly turn it over in your mind. And what will strike you? Why, surely first the heinousness of sin. Was there nothing that could wash out sin but blood? And was there no blood that could wash it out but the blood of the Son of God? O Sin! O Sin! What a black, what a damning thing you are! Only the blood of an Incarnate God can wash out the smallest stain of sin. My heart, I charge you to hate it! My eyes, look not on it. My ears, listen not to its siren charm! My feet, run not in its paths! My hands, refuse to handle it! My soul, loathe, loathe that which murdered Christ and thrust a spear through the most tender heart that ever beat!   
Next to that, do you not feel emotions of intense gratitude that if such a price was needed, such a price was found? God had but one Son, dearer to Him than Isaac was to Abraham, and though there was none to command Him to do it, as there was in Abrahams case, yet voluntarily the gracious Father led His Son up to the Cross. And it pleased the Father to bruise Him. He put Him to grief. He gave Him up for us! Which shall I most admirethe love of the Father, or the love of the Son? Blessed be God, we are not asked to make distinctions, for they are One! I and My Father are One, and in that sacred act of the Sacrifice for the sins of men, the Father and the Son are both to be worshipped with equal love. You see, then, the heinousness of sin in some degree, for its needing for its pardon the love of Jesus, and the love of God that gave the Saviors blood.   
But, dear Friends, before I sit down, let me remark that we learn from our text and from the whole contemplation what it is that would bring us experimentally nearer than we are tonight. How did I get near first? Through the blood! Do I need to get near to God tonight? Have I been wandering? Is my heart cold? Have I got into a backsliding state? Do I need to come close, now, to my blessed Father, and again to look up to Him and say, Abba, and rejoice in that filial spirit? There is no way for me to come nearer except the blood. Let me think of it, then, and let me see its Infinite value. It is sufficient, let me hear its everlasting, everprevalent plea, and oh, then I shall feel my soul drawn, for that which draws us nearer to God, and will draw us right up to Heaven, is none other than the crimson cord of the Saviors endless, boundless, dying, but ever-living love!   
And this teaches me, and teaches you, too, and here I have done, what it is we ought to preach and teach if we would bring the far-off ones inif we would bring near to God those that now wander from Him. Philosophy, bah! You will philosophize men into Hell, but never into Heaven! Ceremonies you can amuse children with and you can degrade men into idiots with them, but you can do nothing else! The Gospel and the essence of that Gospel, which is the blood of Jesus Christit is this which is an Omnipotent leverage to uplift the filth, debauchery and poverty of this city into life, into light, and into holiness! There is no battering ram that will ever shake the gates of Hell except that which every time it strikes sounds this word, Jesus, Jesus, the Crucified. God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. If it will save us, it will save othersonly let us spread the good news, let us tell of the good tidings. Every one of us ought to preach the Gospel somehow. You that speak in common conversation forget not to speak of Him. Scatter such tracts as are most full of Christthey are the bestothers will be of little use. Write letters concerning Him. Remember His name is like ointment, full of sweetnessbut to get the perfume you must pour it forth. Oh, that we could make fragrant all this neighborhood with the savor of that dear name! Oh, that wherever we dwell, everyone of us might so think of Christ in our hearts that we could not help speaking of Him with our lips! Living, may we rejoice in Him! Dying, may we triumph in Him. May our last whisper on earth be what our first song shall be in Heaven, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us unto God by His blood. Oh, I pray God to make this season of communion very sweet to you, and I think it will be if you have the key of our meditation tonight, and can unlock the doorif you know how far off you were and see how near you are by the precious blood!   
Oh, there are some far-off ones here tonight, however, to whom I must say just this word. Far-off one, God can make you near! You can be made near tonight! Whoever you may be, He is still able to save, but the blood must make you nearthe blood of Jesus! Trust Him. To believe is to liveand to believe means only and simply to trust, to depend upon. That is faith. Have confidence in Christs Sacrifice and you are saved! God grant you may be enabled to do it, for Jesus sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 CHRONICLES 22.**

May the Lord instruct us while we read. Perhaps we shall understand it better if we begin in the 21st Chapter at the 26th verse.   
1 Chronicles 21:26, 27. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he returned his sword to its sheath. And David built therethat is upon the threshing floor of Ornan. The place of sacrifice was the place of salvation! The angel was smiting Jerusalem, but as soon as ever the sacrifice was offered, the angel sheathed his sword.   
28. At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. Then came a sacrifice of thanksgiving, as there always should be after prayer is answered. Remember how the Psalmist puts it, Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altarafter the sin is pardoned and the transgression is put away.   
29, 30 and 1 Chronicles 22:1. For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD. Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel. The place where God had answered himwhere the angel had appeared to him, where the fire had come down from Heavenhe felt to be holiest and that the Lord had directed him to it as the spot where His Temple was to be built. It is very significant that it should be upon a threshing floor, for surely the Church of God is Gods threshing floor, where He gathers His sheaves together and separates between the wheat and the chaff. I will winnow, says He, My threshing floor. Oh, that we might always recognize that Christ is the Temple of God, and Christ is the Sacrifice! Christ is the appearance of God that is better to us than the appearance of angels, and Christ is Gods answer to us by fireand where Christ is, there is the burnt offering.   
2. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew worked stones to build the House of God. It is very observable, not the Israelites, but the foreigners, the aliens, the strangers, the remaining Canaanites that were in the land were set to hew the stones for the House of the Lord. I have heard very good people, indeed, object to the ungodly giving any money whatever to Gods cause. This proves them wronghere are the aliens employed to hew the stones for the House of Godand why should they not? It will do them good, at least, to do some good thing or other in their lives. Let them have an opportunity to do so. But I see here an indication of the calling of the Gentiles, for whenever the Jews said the Gentiles had nothing to do with God, why the very stones of their Temple spoke against them! Were not the timbers brought from Tyre by the Tyrians along in floats? Were not the stones quarried by aliens and foreigners? Oh, the Lord would have His people follow a large, and liberal, and prophetic policy in their dealing with mankind! God forbid that we should shut anybody out from anything that looks like good. Oh, let us not repel themit may be that in repelling their offerings we may be hardening their hearts. David was a wiser man than that.   
3, 4. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joints; and brass in abundance without weight. Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. Here, again, was a kind of prophecy of what would happen in better days, when the poor Gentiles would be permitted to have a share in the building of the House of God. These Tyrians and Zidonians were among the worst of idolaters and yet they were used in their due place and subservience to hew the trees and float them to the Temple, as near as they could get by sea to Joppa.   
5. And David said, Solomon, my son, is young and tender, and the House that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. There is no way of helping young people to serve God like setting them a good example. Let the father feel, with regard to his son, that he is young and tenderhe may not be able to begin, but if I begin, I shall get him in the mode of doing such things, and maybe he may carry out my design when I am sleeping in the grave. It was well, it was wise, it was splendid of David thus to make all preparations that Solomon might afterwards go on with the good work!   
6. So David prepared abundantly before his death. If you cannot do everything yourselfand who can?is it not well to prepare abundantly before our death for somebody else to go on with the work? Thus shall we live after we are deadlive in our sons, if God is so good to uslive in our grandchildren! Who knows?live in someone we were the means of bringing to the Saviors feet by our ministry. Then he called to Solomon, his son. He had prepared everything, and now he speaks to him. And he charges him to build a House for Jehovah, the God of Israel.

7-8. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an House unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build an House unto My name, because You have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. It was not an allusion to Uriahs blood, as some have thought, for God said this to David long before Davids great sin. The wars in which David was engaged were honest wars for the defense and deliverance of the country, in which God had helped him, and yet even the best war is bad in Gods esteem. When blood is shed, God delights not in itand He sets His servant on one side without blaming him, and says, No, a bloody hand is not fit for the building of My Temple. You have been called in the order of Providence to be a warrior and a conqueror. You must be content with thatyou cannot build the Temple to the God of Peace.   
9. Behold a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest. That is a very sweet name for Solomon, A man of rest. I pray that many a Believer here may be a man of that kind. Some Believers have to be men of war. There they are, in a world of struggles, disputes, contentions of their own ambitionsbut happy is that man who is of a gentle and a tender spirit, a spirit of holy wisdom and whom God gives the great privilege to be a man of peace!   
9, 10. And I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an House for My name and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. What a sweet benediction from an aged mans mouth.   
11-13. Now, my son, the LORD be with you and prosper you, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said of you. Only the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the Law of the LORD your God. Then shall you prosper, if you take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. This was addressed to a tender young man by an old man who had displayed much courage. They who have been courageous can safely encourage others to be so. God make us all in every good cause to be free from fear. Like Bernard, the knight, may we be without fear, and without reproach, ever contending for God and His Truth.   
14. Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the House of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold. Whatever sum that may have been, it could hardly have been a Babylonian talent, because that would have made him to have laid up one thousand millions sterling!   
14. And a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber, also, and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto. A capital text for a collectionwhenever there has been a good sum given already, You may add thereto. Next Sunday week we collect for the hospitals. You may add to the gold if you can. You may add to the silver if you can. You may add to the copper if you cannot add to the silver or the gold.   
15. Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance. David had foreseen all that was needed and had got a list of the men of skill and art throughout all his land.   
15. Hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. You remember that text, The Lord showed me four carpenters, and so when the Lord wants carpenters, there will be carpenters! Whatever kind of men He requires for His service, that kind of men shall be forthcoming in the day of needAll manner of cunning men for every manner of work.   
16. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise, therefore and be doing, and the LORD be with you. That is his word to Solomon.   
17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon, his son, sayingWhat a grand thing it is when a man has true-hearted helpersmen who are ready to stint themselves, annihilate themselves, as it wereto help some other man to do the work of the Lord, quite satisfied to be themselves unknown, so long as the House of the Lord is built and Gods name is glorified!   
18. Is not the LORD, your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before His people. So then they had not to fight, but to work! If Jesus Christ has conquered all our foes, and routed all our sinsif sin, death and Hell lie prostrate at His feetwhat can we do but devote our rest and peace to His service?   
19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build you the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the House that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #851 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

NEARNESS TO GOD   
NO. 851

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 17, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.   
Ephesians 2:13.

THE text is a gate of pearl leading up to the excellent Glory. Happy are the men to whom it is given to enter thereby. It turns upon hinges of diamond. Those two phrases, in Christ Jesus, by the blood of Christ these are the two pivots of the precious doctrine of the text. Made near, this is our delightful privilege, but, in Christ Jesus, is one source of the blessing, and by the blood of Christ is the other. Before our rejoicing eyes rolls a sea of love, an ocean of boundless peace and bliss comparable to the sea of glass before the sapphire throne! In order to reach this great Pacific, you must sail through yon narrow strait which flows between the two headlands of union to Christ and cleansing by the atoning blood.

I. We commence, therefore, this morning, by endeavoring to EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE TWO KEY WORDSIn Christ Jesus , and by the blood of Christ. We who once were far off are made near. First, because we are in Christ Jesus. All the elect of God are in Christ Jesus by a federal union. He is their Head ordained of old to be so from before the foundation of the world. As Adam was the federal head of the race and as in him we fell, so Christ, the second Adam, stands as the Head of the chosen people and in Him they rise again and live.

This federal union leads in due time, by the Grace of God, to a manifest and vital uniona union of life and for lifeeven unto eternal life, of which the visible bond is faith. The soul comes to Jesus and lays hold on Him by an act of faith because Jesus has already laid hold upon that soul by the power of His Spirit, claiming it to be His heritage, seeing He has bought it with His blood and His Father has given it to Him as the reward of the travail of His soul. All who are in Christ Jesus in the eternal Covenant of Grace, shall, in due time, be in Him by the living union of which we now speakmystical and mysteriousbut still most real, most true and most efficient.

Now, Beloved, when a soul becomes really in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, and draws its nourishment from the stem, as the limb is in the body and derives all its vitality from the central heartwhen a man thus becomes one with Christ, it is clear to the most common observer that he must be near to Godfor Christ is ever near to God and those one with Him must be near, also. Jesus is Himself Godhere is nearness outdone! As Man He is without spot or blemish and near to God in Character. As having finished the work which was given Him to do, He is near to God in acceptance. As having gone up to Heaven to take the promised crown, He is near to God in Person. And since we are one with Him, we must be from that very fact near to God, yes, as near to God as Christ Himself is!

Understand that if anything is one with a man, actually one with that man, it stands in the same place as that man does. So if we are one with Christ by a real and actual unionwhere Christ is, we are! Christs standing is our standing! And as Christ is near unto God, even so He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places. We are

*So near, so very near to God,   
We cannot nearer be,   
For in the Person of His Son,   
We are as near as He.*

The other key word of the text is, by the blood of Christ. If it is asked what power lies in the blood to bring near, it must be answered, first, that the blood is the symbol of the Covenant. Ever in Scripture when covenants are made, victims are offered and the victim becomes the place and ground of approach between the two covenanting parties. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly called, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, for God comes in Covenant near to us by the blood of His onlybegotten Son. Every man whose faith rests upon the blood of Jesus slain from before the foundations of the world is in Covenant with God and that Covenant becomes to him most sure and certain because it has been ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ and therefore can never be changed or disannulled.

The blood brings us near in another sense because it is the taking away of the sin which separated us. When we read the word, blood, as in the text, it means mortal sufferingwe are made near by the griefs and agonies of the Redeemer. The shedding of blood indicates pain, loss of energy, health, comfort, happiness. But it goes further stillthe term, blood, signifies death. It is the death of Jesus in which we trust. We glory in His life. We triumph in His Resurrection. But the ground of our nearness to God lies in His death.

The term, blood, moreover, signifies not a mere expiring, but a painful and ignominious and penal death. A death not brought about by the decay of nature, or the arrows of disease, but caused by the sharp sword of Divine vengeance. The word, in fact, refers directly to the Crucifixion of our Lord. We are brought near to God especially and particularly by a crucified Savior pouring out His lifes blood for us! Beloved, it is well to note this well-known doctrine, because there are some teachersand I doubt not very excellent men, toowho seem not to be of Pauls mind when he said, God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who resolved to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

These Brethren are incessantly preaching concerning Christ glorified, a valuable Truth of God, I allow, but not the way of a sinners access to God. Christs Second Coming was never intended to take the place of Christs Crucifixion and yet there have been some, I fear, who, in their zeal for the very great and important Truth of the coming Glory, have suffered the blazing light of the Second Advent to obscure the milder radiance and the more healing beams of the First Advent, with its bloody sweat, its scourges, its crown of thorns and ransom price for lost sinners.

Let it never be forgotten that while we bless Immanuel, God with us, for His Incarnation. And we joyfully perceive that even our Lords birth in human flesh brought man near to God. While we thank and praise the Man of Sorrows for His Divine example and we see that this is a blessed help to us practically to advance towards our heavenly Father. While we praise and magnify the Lord Jesus for His Resurrection and His Ascension and discern in each glorious step fresh rungs of the ladder which leads from earth to Heaven. Yet still, for all that, we are not made near to God by the Incarnation! We are not in very deed made near to God by the Resurrection, nor by the Second Advent, but we are made near by the blood of Christ.

The first, the grandest, the highest, the most essential Truth of God for us to lay hold of and to preach is the fact that Jesus Christ died for our sakes according to the Scriptures and that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and for sinners gave Himself up to die, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. God is glorified because Christ was punished for the sin of His people. Love has its full, but Law has its due. On the Cross we see sin fully punished and yet fully pardoned. We see Justice with her gleaming sword triumphant and Mercy with her silver scepter reigning in sublime splendor!

Glory be to the wondrous wisdom which discovered the way of blending vengeance with love, making a tender heart to be the mirror of unflinching severity, causing the crystal vase of Jesus loving Nature to be filled with the red wine of righteous wrath!

*O love of God, how strong and true!   
Eternal and yet ever new,   
Uncomprehended and unbought,   
Beyond all knowledge and all thought.   
We read You best in Him who came   
To bear for us the Cross of shame   
Sent by the Father from on high,   
Our life to live, our death to die.*

Beloved, you thus see that we are made near because the blood of Christ has sealed a Covenant between us and God and has forever taken away the sin which separated us from God. Experimentally, we are brought near by the application of the blood to our conscience. We see that sin is pardoned and bless the God who has saved us in so admirable a manner, and then we who hated Him, before, come to love Him.

We who had no thought towards Him desire to be like He is. We are experimentally, and in our own souls, drawn and attracted to God by the blood of Jesus. The great attracting loadstone of the Gospel is the doctrine of the Cross. To preach the atoning sacrifice of Jesus is the shortest and surest way, under Gods Holy Spirit, to draw those that are far off, mentally and spiritually, very near unto God! Thus have I dwelt upon those two key words upon which the text seems to me to hinge.

II. Let us pass on to ILLUSTRATE THE NEARNESS into which God has been pleased to bring us in Christ Jesus by virtue of His blood. I shall take three illustrations from the Word of God. The first illustration is from our first parent, Adam. Adam dwelt in the Garden, abiding with God in devout communion. The Lord God walked in the Garden in the cool of the day with Adam. As a favored creature, the first man was permitted to know much of his Creator and to be near to Him.

But, alas, Adam sinned and at once we see the first stage of our own distance from God as we perceive Adam in the Garden without his God. In the Garden, in the very midst of Paradise, flowers shedding their sweet perfume, fruits hanging ready to his hand on every sideand yet man is wretched, miserable and cowardly! He hides among the trees of the Garden until the Lord God calls to him, Adam, where are you? Here is the first stage of distance and it is sad and terrible. But, ah, Brethren, you and I were further off than thatmuch further off than that when love made us near!

It would have been a great wonder of Divine Grace if, being in such a position, God had restored us again to His favor. If He had said to us after one transgression, I have blotted out your sin like a cloud: I have passed by your offense, I restore you to happiness. But the Grace which God has shown to us is as much greater than this as the thorn-bearing soil is sterner than Edens laughing flowers.

Adam was brought before his God, arraigned, upbraided and condemned to be expelled from Paradise. Justice drove out the man. With fiery sword the cherubim keep watch at Edens gate. Adam banished into the cold, sin-blighted world, to till the ground from where he was taken, with the promise ringing in his ear, The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpents head, is the second stage of distance from God. Now, it would have been great Grace for God to take Adam from outside the Garden, to forgive him, to bring him within the happy gate and restore him to his former placebut the mercy worked in us is greater still!

You and I were further gone than Adam outside of Eden, with a Gospel promise newly given him. We were not on the threshold of Paradise, but we were far off by wicked works. Our natural position as Gentile sinners was not with Adam outside the gate, but with the nations that knew not God! Our position was as when they had wandered farthest away from Paradise, had become most estranged from God and had set up many gods, and many lords, and had polluted and defiled themselves with all manner of uncleanness!

See now the steps which God has taken with us Gentile dogs, as the Jews once called us! He has taken us, who were of old an idolatrous people, practicing bloody ritesa nation without knowledge of the Divine oracles and He has illuminated us with the Gospel of His Grace, bringing the kingdom of God very near unto us and ourselves very near to it. The Lord has been pleased to separate many of us to Himself and bring us into His visible Church so that we dwell within that garden walled around, chosen and made peculiar ground. This is no small deed of love! Aliens are made fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God!

Yet, much more than this has been done for true Believers in the blood of Jesus. Not the name only, but the very essence and soul of true piety is ours, so that once again we walk with God! And in communion with the saints and with their Lord, we find a new garden of delight whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, camphor with spikenard. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphor, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon. We might date our letters from Elysium, for, we that have believed do enter into rest. Yes, we are restored by Divine Grace to the Kings garden! We have found Glory begun below

*Celestial fruits on earthly ground,   
From faith and hope do grow.*

Let me now give you a second illustration, which may place this wonder of love in a still clearer light. It shall be taken from the children of Israel traveling through the wilderness. If an angel had poised himself in mid air and watched awhile in the days of Moses, gazing down upon the people in the wilderness and all else that surrounded them, his eyes would have rested upon the central spot, the tabernacle, over which rested the pillar of cloud and fire by day and night, as the outward index of the Presence of God.

Now, observe yonder select persons clad in fair white linen, who come near, very near, to that great centerthey are priestsmen who are engaged from day to day sacrificing bullocks and lambs and serving God. They are near to the Lord and engaged in most hallowed work, but they are not the nearest of all. One man, alone, comes nearest. He is the high priest, who, once every year, enters into that which is within the veil. Ah, what condescension is that which gives us the same access to God! The priests are servants of God and very near to Him, but not nearest. And it would be great Grace if God permitted the priests to enter into the Most Holy Place.

But, Brothers and Sisters, we were not by nature comparable to the priests. We were not the Lords servants. We were not devoted to His fear and the Grace that has brought us near through the precious blood was much greater than that which admits a priest within the veil. Every priest that went within the veil entered there by blood which he sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. If made near, even from the nearer stage, it must be by blood and in connection with the one only High Priest.

If the angel continued his gaze he would next see lying all round the tabernacle the twelve tribes in their tents. These were a people near unto Godfor what nation has God so near unto them? Deuteronomy 4:7. But they are nothing like so near as the

priests. They did not abide in the holy court, nor were they always occupied in worship. Israel may fitly represent the outward Church, the members of which have not yet received all the spiritual blessing they might have, yet are they blessed and made near. If ever an Israelite advanced into the court of the priests, it was with blood. He came with sacrifice. There was no access without it. It was great favor which permitted the Israelite to come into the court of the priests and partake in Divine worship. But, Brethren, you and I were farther off than Israel and it needed more Grace, by far, to bring us near. By blood alone are we made near, and by blood displayed in all the glory of its power!

Outside the camp of Israel altogether, you would have seen a company of miserable wretches who herded together as best they couldlepers unclean, driven outside the camp. This is more like our position. If ever these lepers were brought near enough to come into communion with the camp of Israel, much more to come into communion with the priests, their access must be wholly and alone by blood. The turtle dove, or the young pigeon must be slain. The lamb must be killed, the scarlet wool and hyssop must be used. There was no purging of the leper to bring him into communion with the tribes of Israel except by blood.

And oh, wewe in our filthiness so like the leperwe have to praise almighty Grace which looked upon us when our natural depravity stared us in the facewhen it had become apparent by our continued disobedience to God! We have to praise the mercy which has brought us right away from the lepers place to as near to God as the accepted high priest before the veil! Beloved, had the angel still continued his gaze, he would have observed that even these lepers were far more favored than the other inhabitants of the world, for the whole world was lying in darkness, without God, without a revelation of His Glory.

THIS is our position, this last one! We were the aliens, the strangers, the foreigners! A leper, though a leper, was still an Israelite, and if he could not go up into the sanctuary of the Lord, yet still there was the mark of the Covenant of his flesh and he was of the seed of Abraham and the wing of God in the cloudy pillar covered him! He ate the manna and drank of the rock. But as for the poor heathenfor them there was no appointed way of accessthey were cast out and left to perish in their sins! The old Covenant did not, so far as its outward manifestation was concerned, have a word to say to US!

Far off, then, with the Gentiles is your place and my place. We are by nature out of covenant and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. There you are right away in the dark heathen world. And what did Gods Grace do for you? Why, it brought you, first of all, into connection with Gods people and under the sound of the Gospels silver trumpet! You became like the poor leper, but still you were near to Israel, hearing the Gospel and learning the way of salvation. Thank God for bringing you so near as that, for there is no small privilege in hearing the Truth of God. But Divine Grace did not stop there. It purged and cleansed you, and you were admitted into fellowship with the Church.

You became numbered with the seed of Israel! You pitched your tent near the tabernacle and partook of its abundant blessings! But Grace did not stop there. It made you, next, a priest unto God, a consecrated servant of the Lord of Hosts and you have been kept by Grace in the place of holy service! You are still the Lords anointed priest and your sacrifices are well-pleasing in His sight. But here is the wonder of wonderswhen the eternal love of God had brought you so near, so gloriously near, it did not stop there! It did not content itself with making you a priest, but it said you shall stand in Christ Jesus! And, Beloved, you know that this means that we are made as near Christ Himself, who, as the great High Priest, with blood in His hand, goes right into the veil, right up to the Mercy Seat and talks with God!

A third illustration of our nearness to God will be found around the peaks of the mount of God, even Sinai, where the various degrees of access to God are set forth with singular beauty and preciseness of detail. The 19th chapter of the book of Exodus tells us that the Lord revealed Himself on the top of Sinai with flaming fire and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace. Jehovah drew near unto His people Israel, coming down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai, while the tribes stood at the foot of the mountain.

Now remember that our natural position was much more remote than Israel at the foot of the mountain, for we were a Gentile nation to whom God did not appear in His Glory and with whom He spoke not as with Israel. We were living in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death and Israel was privileged to come very near as compared with us. Therefore the Apostle, in the chapter from which the text is taken, speaks of the circumcised as near. I take Israel to be to us this morning the type of those who live under Gospel privileges and are allowed to hear the joyful sound of salvation bought with blood.

There stand the tribes at the foot of the mountain. They can hear the sound of the trumpet waxing exceedingly loud and long and a distinct voice proclaiming the Law of Godthey hear it and it affects their hearts and prostrates them with awe. Boundaries were set round about the mountain and an ordinance was given that if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. Their distance was thus far more apparent than their comparative nearness. Do you see them standing therethe whole vast hosthearing, hearing distinctly and trembling as they hearat last trembling so much that they say to Moses, Speak you with us and we will hear. But let not God speak with us lest we die?

Their fear made them remove further stillwhat they saw and heard of God begot in them no loveit did not draw them to Him, but the reverse! They promised fairly to Moses that they would keep all Gods Laws, that they would serve him with all their hearts. But alas, their goodness soon vanished! They had been outwardly purified and made ready, sanctified, as Moses says, to behold the Glory of the Lord. But alas, after a few short days they deliberately fell into idolatry, worshipping a golden calf forgetting the solemnities of the Law and indifferent to the will of God who had displayed Himself to them. Very near they were, and yet far enough off to perishfor their carcasses fell in the wilderness and with many of them He was not well-pleased.

Ah, my dear Hearers, there is much Grace in the fact that you are brought near enough, all of you, to be able to hear the Gospel plainly and earnestly delivered. At the base of Mount Zion you have stood trembling while we have warned you of the judgment to come and told you of the indignation of God against sin. You have been like Israel, ready to sink into the earth with fear and you have promised, some of you very fairly, that before long you would repent and believe the Gospel. The Gospel command has come to your conscience with such power that you have been compelled to promise obedience to it! But alas, what has been the result of your fear and your vow? You have gone farther back from God and have plunged anew into the worlds idolatryand are today worshipping yourselves, your pleasures, your sins, or your righteousness!

And when the Lord comes, the nearness of opportunity which you have enjoyed will prove to have been to you a most fearful responsibility and nothing more. You come to the mount of God and hear His voice, but like Israel you go your way to rebel yet more and more! Sometimes, under earnest sermons, or by solemn Providences, or by the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, you have been almost persuaded to be Christians! But yet you are, to this hour, without Christ and without hope! You came up to the turning point, but you stopped there. We all hoped well of you. We could almost have clapped our hands in the certainty of our hope that you would be saved and yet you remained like Israelonly near in the point of outward privilegebut not brought near by the blood so as to be saved.

Child of God, be thankful for that first stage of nearness this morning, for even this is given us by blood! If there had been no paschal lamb, Israel had never stood at Sinai. And if there had been no blood shedding you had never heard the Gospel. But bless the Lord that you have advanced far, far beyond this into a nearness infinitely preferable! Turning to the 24th chapter of Exodus, you will observe that the Lord said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel; and worship afar off.

The next stage of nearness to God is pictured by the chosen men selected from the people who were to climb halfway up the hill, nearer to the thick canopy of darkness which veiled the Presence of God. But still they are said to have worshipped afar off. Now, note that these 70 could not come nearer than the people except by bloodturn to the 5th verse, And Moses sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.

The select band of representative men could not come into a degree of superior nearness without blood. It was a great honor to be called out from among the people to enjoy a nearer audience with the Almighty Lord. Surely those men, with their souls hushed under a deep sense of awe would, nevertheless, rejoice and say, What are we and what is our fathers house, that we are called upon to climb so near to God? Those 70 may be used to represent the

visible Church of Jesus Christ. Church members are all, in a certain sense, made nearer to God than the mere common hearers of the Word and their position is one of eminent honor and privilege.

In the case of the 70, it is said, they saw the God of Israel10th versethat is to say, they had a remarkably vivid impression upon their minds of His august Presenceand there was under His feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone. That is, they were permitted to see the justice, the holiness, the purity of God typified by a pavement of clear crystal. As the text continuesas it were the body of Heaven in His clearness. They were doubtless overwhelmed with a sense of the awful majesty, holiness and purity of God. But they were encouraged by Divine mercy to be of good cheer, so that they saw God, and did eat and drink.

They had manifest communion with the Most High and yet they did not die under the blaze of Glory. Upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand. See here a fair type of the Glory which God gives to His visible Church! We are selected and taken out from among men to be a people near unto Him. We are made, as Church members, to have a clearer view than others of the holiness and Glory of God. We are permitted to eat and drink in His Presence, to sit down at His table and yet to live. We are favored in the Church with many gracious displays of the Lords love and Grace such as the world sees not.

But I want you to notice a Truth of God which strikes me as so solemnly full of warning. Among those who thus were privileged to enter into this nearness, we have the names of Nadab and Abihuand what became of them? They were destroyed before the Lord for offering strange fire upon the altar! So that it is clear that there is an official nearness of God which does not secure men from wrath. In the Christian Church, there may be, no, it seems as if there always must be some who shall, without doubt, perishand the fire of God shall devour them. I wish that those who join the Church without due consideration would solemnly recollect that it is not necessary for them to thrust themselves into such an awful position unless they know that they are the people of God. It were a pity for them to increase their own condemnation by such a willful act of presumption.

Note well that passage concerning the unfaithful servant who said in his heart, My lord delays his coming, and began to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken. For it is written, The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looks not for him and at an hour when he is not aware and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. The sacrifices of the Covenant were cut in sunder and so the Covenant was ratified.

Now, the man who mocks the Covenant by intruding himself into the fellowship to which he belongs not shall receive upon himself the curse which for others our Great Sacrifice has borne. There will be singular judgments for ungodly Church members. It were good for such men that they had never been born! Judgment is to begin at the House of God. His fan is in His hand. And what will He do with it? He will thoroughly purge His floor. When He sits as a refiner, whom will He purify? Mark the words of MalachiHe will purify the sons of Levi. His fire, where is it? It is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem. There shall be no such condemnation as that which shall be measured out to those who, in official standing, possess peculiar nearness to God and yet, like Nadab and Abihu, have not the true spirit, are unfaithful in service, look not to the Savior in truth and so are cast away after all!

Most worthy of your notice is another fact connected with the 70 and that is when Moses went up into the higher Glory, he bade Aaron and the 70 stay where they were, but they failed to do it. He said unto the elders (in the 14th verse), Tarry you here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man has any matters to do, let him come unto them. Moses was then gone from them for 46 or 47 days at the least and their duty was to have remained where he had appointed their place. If the people needed Aaron, they were to send up to himhe need not cease to direct and judge the people, but they were to come to himhe was not to go down to them.

Now, what did Aaron do? Why, he went down to the camp and fell into the black sin of making a molten image! And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. Aaron would never have made that golden calf if he had stayed upon the mountain where he was told to remain.

What does this say to us? Is not the lesson plain? The visible Church is too prone to come down to the world and even those who are Gods servants, when they are lifted up into a state of nearness to God, seldom abide there. They conform to this evil worldthey descend from their true eminence, they mix with the peopleand they, who have seen God in His Glory like unto a sapphire stone, are found pandering to the corruption of the world! To what a state of degradation may any of us come unless the Lord shall hold us up! We may go up very far and may see God and then come down and become the instruments of the sins of others, as Aaron did.

If you read on, in the 24th chapter, you will observe that the Lord called to Moses again and he went up the hill attended by one single person. And Moses rose up and his minister, Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. So these two men go alone and Joshua comes to what I may call the fringe of the black cloud of darkness which hung over the central peak of Sinai. There he stopped and there by Gods Grace he was able, patiently, to remain the first six days with Moses and those other 40 days, while Moses was on the top alone. Joshua, by Gods Grace, was enabled to maintain the true, real, abiding, faithful communion with God!

And he seems to me to represent those virgin souls among Gods elect ones who follow the Lamb where ever He goes. Those men, greatly beloved, who are delivered by abundant Grace from much of the instability of the majority of professors, so that they walk in the light as He is in the light. They abide in their Lord and His Word abides in them. These come not down to the people as Aaron and the elders did, but their conversation is in Heaven and their walk is with God. Such men fall not into the peoples sin, but tarry in solitary nonconformity to a degenerate Church. Even these do not realize the fullness of the nearness which belongs to them in the Mediator, but they come very, very near to God.

Now what are such men sure to be? What was Joshua? He was a warrior and of martial spirit. When Moses came down from the mount with Joshua, Joshua said to him, There is a sound of war in the camp. As a warrior he would naturally be apprehensive of a foe. Moses descended alone till he met his servant, Joshua, waiting in his place. The two went down till they came to the place where the 70 ought to be, but they were all goneall gone! And at the foot of the mountain, where they might have expected to find Israel on their knees in prayer, they saw a ribald crew indulging in vile orgies before a golden calf! Joshuas example seems to say to us, that if we are to keep up our fellowship with Christ, we must fight for it! If we would be men of God, we must be warriors for the Truth of God! What a blessing if we can get to such a point as this!

But there is something beyond it and I desire to bring you to it by bidding you observe that Moses is the type of the Mediatorhe went right up to the greatest nearness of access and there he communed with Godhe interceded with God and he received from Gods hand the revelation of Gods Law! Now hear and wonder, We who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ, and brought to stand as near as Moses stood, for we are in Jesus as near to God as possible. It was something to come as near as Israel. It was more to advance as near as the elders. It was higher, still, to be called as near as Joshua.

But to be brought as near as Moses, through the precious blood, so that we dwell in God, rejoice in Him, intercede with Him, have power with Him and receive from Him the revelation of His Truth by the energy of His Holy Spiritthis is the crown of all! O that we may go down with a Glory upon our faces like that upon the face of Moses, to show the sons of men that we have been with Jesus in the Holy Place and are filled with all the fullness of God!

Looking at these stages of nearness, does it not seem a tremendous distance from our place in far-off Tarshish and the isles thereof, among the heathen, into the camp of Israel, up the sides of the mountain with the elders, higher still with Joshua and beyond Joshua into the secret place of the majesty of the Most High, where the Mediator of that Covenant stood alone and where our Mediator stands forever with all those who are in Him?!

III. Let US NOTE SOME OF THE DISPLAYS OF THE REALIZATIONS OF THIS NEARNESS TO GOD as granted to us by blood through our union with Christ. We perceive and see manifestly our nearness to God in the very first hour of our conversion. The father fell upon the prodigals neck and kissed himno greater nearness than that! The prodigal becomes an accepted childis and must be very near his fathers heart.

And we, who sometimes were far off, are as near to God as a child to his parents. We have a renewed sense of this nearness in times of restoration after backsliding, when, pleading the precious blood, we say, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. We come to God and feel that He is near unto them that are of a broken heart. We come near to God in prayer. Our nearness to God is peculiarly evinced at the Mercy Seat. The very term we use for prayer is, Let us draw near unto God. But, Brothers and Sisters, we never get to God in prayer unless it is through pleading the precious blood!

We see our nearness to God in the act of praise. Oftentimes in praising Him, we have taken the wings of seraphs and passed up into the Glory and magnified the Lord, but it has always been through Him who by His precious blood makes our praises acceptable to the Most High. We who have believed come very near to God in the act of Baptism, for we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Wicked and base is he who has dared to touch that ordinance, unless he sincerely desired fellowship in the Lords death. The nearness we get to God in Baptism by faith depends upon whether or not we see the blood there and behold Jesus as buried for us.

Then in the Lords Supperwhat nearness is there! But it, too, all lies in the blood. We get no nearness through the wine, no nearness through the breadthe elements are nothing of themselvesit is only when we get to feel that our Lords flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood drink, indeed, that we draw near to Him. And, Beloved, when we have done with means of Grace, with communing here, and meditations and prayers and praises, we shall get nearer to our God up yonderin the place where they see His face and bear His name upon their foreheads.

But why shall we then draw near to Him? It is written, They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple.

IV. I have thus hinted at various times when this nearness to God develops itself and is most seen. Let us close with a BRIEF EXHORTATION. Let us live in the power of the nearness which union with Christ and the blood has given us. It is a well-known rule that our minds are sure to be occupied with those things which are most near to us. We may excuse ourselves for being so worldly because the things of this world are so near usbut we must never venture to repeat that excuse againsince we now know that we are made near to God and heavenly things by the blood.

Let your conversation be in Heaven: Where your treasure is, there let your heart be. Beloved, if we are, indeed, so near to God through the blood and through union with Christ, let us enjoy those things which this nearness was intended to bring! Those who live under the equator never lack for light or heat. There vegetation is luxuriant and every form of life is well developed. They who dwell far away in the frigid zone, where the sun only casts his slanting rays, may well be meager and short of stature and feel the pinch of poverty.

We who dwell under the equator of the Lords love must bring forth much fruit! Let us rejoice with joy unspeakable! Let our souls be like those torrid zones where all the birds have plumage rich and rare, where brilliant flowers abound, where everything is fall of vigor! If we are so near to God, it follows as a very natural exhortation that we should exercise much faith in Him. If I am, indeed, brought so near to God, why should I be afraid that He will leave me in poverty? If I were a stranger and He knew me not, He might cast me away. But if I am near to Him, as near as Christ is, He cannot be unkind, thoughtless, or ungenerous to me. Near to Him! Why, my name is on the palms of Jesus hands! I live in Jesus heart! And I live, if I am in Christ, under the very eyes of God! He will keep me as He keeps the apple of His eye.

One other word. Let us maintain a behavior suitable to the high position which Divine Grace has given us. If we are a people near to God, let us walk in all integrity, uprightness, chastity, honesty, sobernessin one word, in all holiness. Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. If you have looked upon the pavement of sapphire, you must have seen your own sinfulness in contrast with its azure brightness. Pray the Lord to give you of His Spirit, that you may become like He who is thus so pure and glorious in all things!

Let not the sons of God demean themselves! Let not princes of the blood imperial be found among the common herd. As you are to be the compeers of angels, no, as you are higher far than they, and one with Christand as the precious blood has been your ransom pricewalk as becomes saints! The Lord help you to do so, that His name may be glorified. Amen.

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CHRIST OUR PEACE   
NO. 3386

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1913.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 19, 1868.

He is our peace.   
Ephesians 2:14.

THE true minister of Christ is not satisfied to be long away from his main theme. There are many things which it is very proper for him to speak upon in your hearing. We dare not forget the Doctrines of the Word of God, or the precepts, or the experiences of Gods people. But recognizing the claims of all these, God forbid that we should glorify save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is the preaching of Christ which is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore, wherever we may wander around the circumference, we always feel a drawing in of our soul toward the center, which is Christ in you, the hope of Glory.

And if the preacher feels that he cannot go on long in the pulpit without preaching up his Lord and Master, I am quite sure that all the saints of God feel that they cannot be long content without this theme. They must constantly have Christ. As often as the table is spread in our homes, we need bread. We do not care to have the same meats and drinks in the morning, at mid-day and at the evening meal. We like to have a frequent change of food, but we always want the breadand the table is badly furnished, let it have what it may upon it, if there is not there the bread which is the staff of life! So the Believer delights in the variety of Gods Word and there is no Truth which is not precious to him. He counts the very shavings of truth to be like the dust of diamonds. Let every particle of it be gathered up and treasured, yes, so treasured that men may be ready to die for the slightest fragment of a Truth of God! But still, the purest diamond, the Koh-I-Noor of the whole, is the Doctrine of the Savior suffering for our sinsand if we do not hear much concerning the Lamb of God, if this is not the big bell that is rung most often, we feel that none of the others can make up for the lack! If this silver trumpet of Jubilee is not blown, the year is dull and dreary, and the service of Gods sanctuary becomes an empty thing. Christ, Christ, Christ! Oh, that we may always make Him the sum and substance of our ministry and that you may always desire Christ as the Water of Life to your soulsyour All-in-All, without whom you cannot be at rest! We come then, at this time, to our dear theme, praying God the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. It is His officemay He tenderly consider us and fulfill that office in our soulshere and now!

There are only four words in the text and, therefore, four things may suffice us for tonight. The first great word, or, at any rate, the second greatest, is the word, peace, and we shall think for a little while upon that, considering

I. IN WHAT SENSE WE ARE TO REGARD THE EXPRESSION, HE IS OUR PEACE.   
The text compels us to begin with the thought, the Lord Jesus Christ is peace between the Jew and the Gentile. There was an old enmity between these two, an enmity on both sides. The Jew looked down upon the Gentile. He said, I am of the seed of Abraham, the friend of Godours are the oracles, ours the true God and the Covenantas for you Gentiles, you are an idolatrous seed whom God has left, as He did your father, to carry out the devices of your own hearts and to perish in your uncircumcision. The Jew called the Gentile a dog, thought him unclean, would have no friendly dealings with him, considered that uncircumcised men were little better than beasts and scarcely to be written down in the same list as the seed of Israel.   
And the Gentiles, with equal earnestness and intensity, returned the enmity, for if the Jew taunted the Gentile with uncircumcision, much more did the Gentile ridicule the Jew because of his circumcision! The most severe edicts, especially under the Roman Empire, were passed against the Jews. Some of the Emperors expressed themselves as believing them to be the most detestable of all races! One of them said that he had seen the heathens of Sarmatia and had beheld the barbarous tribes of the North, but he had seen all vices and all wickedness outdone among the Jews! It was not trueit was a gross liebut it shows what was the enmity of the Gentile mind generally against the Jew, for the fact was that in those days the Jew was looked upon as unsocial. He never mingled with other nations. He could by no possibility be absorbed into other tribes, but held firmly to his nationality and would not be reckoned among the people. Hence there was a perpetual conflict. But my Brothers and Sisters, no sooner did the Lord Jesus Christ display the fullness of the Gospel in the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit resting upon the Jew, than the Jew began to preach to the Gentile! There was a little tug in Peters heart at first. He hardly liked it, but still, God gave him a vision and immediately he went to preach the Gospel among those whom he had counted to be common and unclean! As for Paul, though a Pharisee of the Pharisees, though one of the strictest of Jews, yet he seems to have taken naturally to preaching among the Gentiles as soon as he was converted. He immediately went to these despised people and began to declare unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ! Now, in Christ Jesus, what fraternity there is, my Brothers and Sisters, between the seed of Israel and the Gentile stock! How we all feel that we are one! How many of the Jewish people has the Lord called! I hear it sometimes said that He called a larger proportion of the Jews than He has of the Gentiles, for, remember, the seed of Israel is but small, while the Gentiles at the present time number, I suppose, a thousand millions at least, so that a small number of Christian Jews make a large proportion to the bulk! But wherever you meet with a converted Jew, a true Believer, there is no more hearty lover of the Gentiles, no one more desirous to see the Gentiles saved!

And when you meet with a genuine, converted, instructed Gentile, how his heart goes out toward the seed of Israel and how rejoiced he is when he hears that some of the Lords Brothers and Sisters, according to the flesh, are converted to the faith in the crucified Jesus! Yes, there is now no longer enmity. It is all over. Nothing can be more un-Christian than for a Christian to despise a Jew! Nothing is more unlike the spirit of our Master than when you laugh at the Jew and speak of him with contempt. Remember that the King of kings was a Jew! The Lord Jesus Christ, Himselfwhom we adore as true Deitycame in our humanity as of the stock of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Let there always be love and concord between usand when the Lord shall be pleased to take the veil from Israels eyesthen shall be our happy time as well as theirs. The Lord send it soon that He may be glorified.   
Enough, however, upon that. The Lord Jesus Christ is our peace in a second sense, namely, in making peace between nations. That there are wars in the world at the present time is not the consequence of anything that Christ has said, but of the lusts of our flesh. As I understand the Word of God, I always rejoice to find a soldier a Christian, but I always mourn to find a Christian a soldier, for it seems to me that when I take up Christ Jesus, I hear one of His Laws, I say unto you, resist not evil. Put up your sword into its sheath; he that takes the sword shall perish by the sword. The followers of Christ in these days seem to me to have forgotten a great part of Christianity. How many of you would go tomorrow into a court of law and, if you were called upon to do it, would take an oath, whereas if there is anything taught in Scripture, it is expressly taught that you are not to swear at all, neither by Heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath! If Christ ever delivered a plain precept, it is this and yet all denominations of Christians seem to have cast it to the winds, with the exception of the Society of Friends. And so with regard to this matter of war. Our Apostle does not mince matters when he says, Whence come wars? Whence come fights? Come they not from your own lusts? That is the top and bottom of it, but, wherever true Christianity prevails, war becomes less frequent. It is owing to Christianity that war is far less commonthough still too frequentthan it used to be. The length of human life has been much increased by the prevalence of peaceand wars, devastating wars, though, alas, they still break out are not so constant as once they were and we are confidently looking forward to the time when the Messiah shall wield His blessed scepter and wars shall cease to the ends of the earth! Then shall men  
*Hang the useless helmet high,   
And study war no more.*   
Then shall the shrill clarion of the battlefield yield to the pipe of shepherds plaintive melody. Then shall the weaned child play upon the hole of the asp and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. Oh, that the Prince of Peace would come and establish His empire upon a firm foundation! Then could we, indeed say, He is our peace!   
But, Brothers and Sisters, there is another meaning in the text. The Lord Jesus is the great cause of peace between man and man. As soon as you become a Christian, you cannot hate anybody. To be angry without a cause is a sin to you as soon as you are a Believer in Christ! Unless you are a fearful hypocrite, you then forgive every man his offenses and you continue to forgive your brethren even unto 70 times seven, once you become the sincere disciple of Jesus. It is utterly inconsistent with Grace in the heart to harbor malice against your fellow man. Through our infirmity we may be, and sometimes are, quick of temper and sharpand this we ought to regret and mourn overbut to carry in our soul any enmity against any man is contrary to the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ! Give me your hand, my Brother, my Sister, for the sake of Him who died for us! We cannot quarrel at the foot of the Cross! We cannot look up and see the streaming wounds and then break the Kings peace! I mean the peace that the bleeding, thorn-crowned King has made! Especially among Christians, there must not be anything like a shadow of division or discord. And I do pray you, as I have often done, if you would be followers of Christ, be you as little children and lay aside everything like enmity, hatred, variance, strife and jealousies! You will have to live in Heaven together, I hope. Oh, live like heavenly ones together here! You profess to have one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. You say that you are filled with the Holy Spiritthen let no root of bitterness springing up trouble you, lest thereby many are defiled! May that sweet and holy dove, the Spirit of Christ, rest upon all mankind, so that each man may see in his fellow man a Brother or a Sister. May divisions between sects and partiesand especially between nations and men of different colorsbe laid aside and may we all rejoice in one universal confraternity. May the day soon break when there shall be true liberty the world over and fraternity established everywhere after Christs own model!   
Still, Brothers and Sisters, these are only secondary applications of the text. The great peace which Christ has made is between God and man. There was war between man and his God. Man offended and loved to offend. God would have him return and be obedient, but man would not, for his heart was set on mischief. Man had so offended the Divine Law that punishment was inevitable! Jesus Christ came in and bore the chastisement of our peace, suffering an equivalent for what His redeemed would have suffered!   
Now, God can with strictest justice pardon human transgressions. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other at the Cross of Christ. God was merciful and yet was just in our forgivenessand now, between Him and those who are in Christ Jesusthere is no difference, no division, no strife, no war! Therefore, being reconciled by His blood, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We are brought near by the blood of the Atonement. The chasm is bridged, the mountain is removed! Do you enjoy this peace, my dear Hearer? Can you look up to God, the great God, and feel that there is no alienation between you that what He loves, you love? That the object of His heart is the supreme object of yours? That if there has been any idol set up, contrary to Him, in your heart, you desire to have it thrown out? Oh, if it is so, then bless God that He has given you Christ to be your peace!   
And then, Brothers and Sisters, there follows from this peace between man and God peace between man and himself, for man is as much at war with himself as he is with God, and until Christ comes in, he enjoys no rest. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. Some of you know experimentally what it is to have a strife and a warfare going on withinand you will never get a deep and settled calm until Christ comes into the vessel of your soul and says to the winds of your fear, and to the waves of your sins, Peace, be still.   
He that has Christ has a peace that passes all understanding! He that has Christ has great peace and nothing shall offend him. But he that has no Christ has no solid peace. He may say, Peace, peace, where there is no peace, and daub his wall with untempered mortar, but the hail shall sweep away all his refuges of lies! And after his false peace there shall come a terrible alarm. Oh, my Hearer, have you had peace made between God and you by the precious blood? If so, then you are now at rest! But if you are tossed to and fro between one thought and another, you have nothing to rest upon! I pray you listen carefully to what I have to say concerning the Lord Jesus, and may the Holy Spirit bless it to you! Thus much upon that priceless gem, that blessed word, peace.   
The next great word in the text worthy of our adoring thought is that little one of two letters only, the pronoun He. He is our peace.   
II. WHO IS SAID TO BE OUR PEACE?   
What are we to understand by the Lord Jesus Christ being our peace? I want you carefully to notice that it does not say that His work on our behalf is the source of our peace. That, of course, is true, but here it says, He is our peace. He, personallyHEChrist Himself, is the peace of His people! It does not say that He makes our peace, or that He brings us peace. That is very true, most true, but it is a greater Truth that He, Himself, is our peace!  
Now, I beseech you, Believer, to look at this Truth of God very carefully, and you, Unbeliever, too! The unbeliever thinks that in order to get peace, he must perform good works. But see, Man, your good works are not your peace! If they had been, God would have said so plainly, Your good works shall be your peace. But not so, He is our peace. It is not that you are to be a peace unto yourself, nor does it say that your repentance, or tears, or prayers can give you peace. These are good and they are to be used, but the ground of your peace must never be, I have prayed. I have repentedbut HeHe is our peace! There are many things that you may do and that you shall do by the power of the Holy Spirit, but I tell you that none of these things are to be the basis of your comfort! Your souls fountain of crystal comfort is to be Christ and Christ alone! He, He, HeHE is our peace! Nothing in you, nothing you can do, nothing you can feel, but Christ, to whom you must look or perish. He must be your peace!   
Now, Believer, look this in the face. Christ is to be your peacenot your communion with God, nor your high and holy experiences. All these are very precious and I wish we could always be on Tabors brow. It were well for us if, like, Enoch, we always walked with God, but still, our communion must never be looked upon as the ground of our peace with God. It is Christ and Christ, alone, that is our peace! Though you could mount as high as Gabriel and soar aloft through Heaven, as on a wing of firelike the swift archangel, your rapid flight must not be your comfort, nor all the glorious service which you could render to your God, but Christ, Christ, Christ and Christ, alone, must be your peace. Beloved, it is all in vain for any of us to look back and try to find peace in what we have done!

It is a very great comfort to us, in some respects, to have been called by Grace in early youthto have been enabled to preach the Gospel year after year with successand I know what it is to think of all the souls who have been converted under my ministry. I know what it is to remember how many times I have addressed immense crowds of people. But I also know what it is to think, Well, I may do all this and only be more condemned for it! I may do all this and yet be found out to be a miserable hypocrite, after all. Therefore, there is no abiding comfort to be found in this. It is not our doing for Christ, but Christ, Himself, that is our peace! Now, some of you have been in the Sunday School, today, and you do not feel that you have got on well with the children. Well, I am glad if you have a passionate yearning for the salvation of the childrens souls, but do not begin to lose your hope and confidence in Christ because you do not succeed! If you had succeeded, you would have been very mistaken had you taken it as an evidence of your redemption! And if you fear you have not succeeded, have spoken in vain and spent your strength for nothing, do not be greatly cast down by it, for your peace does not lie either in your service, or in your successit lies entirely in Christ!   
I like the remark that was once made by a poor bricklayer who tumbled from the top of a house. A clergyman went to see him and, as he thought the man was dying, he said to him, My dear Fellow, you must try to make your peace with God. Ah, Sir, said the man, you do not understand it, I can see. Make my peace with God? Why that was made for me in the Eternal Covenant before the world began! That was made for me on Calvarys tree of shame, when Christ laid down His life. If Christ had not made my peace with God, I know I could not make it!   
So put all the things you have done and can do, into the scale, Believer, and when they are all therekick them all out againfor they are not worth a single ounce of weight in your souls salvation! Christ must be there! And Christ alone!  
One of the occupations of the dying saint must be the tying up of his bad works and of his good works in one bundlefor they are wonderfully much alikeand throwing them all overboard, every one of them, and floating to Glory on the plank of Free Grace in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is our peace! HE is our peace! If Believers would always remember this, they would not be so often depressed and distressed. Ah, I have often heard this cry, as I told you this morning, I do not grow in Grace as I could wish. I do not serve my Lord as I should. I live at a great distance from Him. I am afraid I dishonor His holy name. I like to hear that! That is all good, very good, but then they go on with thisI am afraid that I shall perish, after alland that is all wrong, very wrong, for if the question is put, Do you trust in Christ? and if the answer is that you do, well then, if God is true, you cannot perish! If all your help comes from Him who made Heaven and earth, and who died upon the bloody tree for your sins, then Heaven and earth may pass away and shall, but His promise cannot! He has given you two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, that you may have strong consolation if you have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus! Do you believe in Jesus? Do you hang upon Christ wholly and entirely? Then are you saved and Gods Word is pledged to bring you safely home at the last! Sanctification must never be put in the place of justificationwhen we do so, we shall miss sanctification, as well as justification. When Believers say, I cannot grow in Grace as I would, and therefore I doubt, do you see what they do? It is as though they said, Here is a plant that will not grow and therefore it shall not have any water. It is impossible for any one of usfor youto get sanctification through doubts! Your doubting takes away the water which alone can nourish the roots of your sanctity. If, in the teeth of all your sins, you still believe in Christ believe over the head of all your shortcomings and your negligencethen your belief will breed love and admiration! And then your love of Christ and your admiration of Him will breed imitationand so there will come holy living to the glory of God! Love is the forceful mainspring of a gracious life, but doubt makes it grow limp and feeble. Doubt snaps the string of your bow, takes off the edge of your sword, makes you languid and powerless and causes all your Divine Graces to flag. Therefore, keep to it, Christian, keep to it and let not the devil, himself, drag you from it! He is our peacemy peacenot myself, nor anything that is in me, but Christ Jesus alone!   
I have thus put the negative of it, but now let us take the positive. He is our peace. By this is meant, first, that the Person of Christ is our peace. He is God. I rest on Him. I have perfect peace, then, for He is Almighty, He cannot fail me. He is inimitableHe will not leave me. He is Truth itselfHe will not belie His word.   
Jesus Christ is also Man, and if Man, then He sympathizes with me, being touched with a fellow feeling for me in my infirmities. Then with such a heart of tenderness, He will not throw up the work of Grace, but He will bear with my ill manners and be my Brother born for adversity, even to the end. So, then, the complex Person of Christ, as God, as well as Man, is the peace of the Believer when he trusts Him.   
In the next place, the perfect righteousness of Christ is another part of our peace. In a delightful little book upon the Person of Christ by good Mr. Bonar, he speaks about our sins as though they were so many mud creeksour sins of unbelief, neglect, lack of love and so on. Well, but wherein we have failed, Christ has not failedevery duty in which we have come short, He has fulfilled! For every sin that we commit, you will always find an opposite virtue in Christ. Well says Mr. Bonar, Then Christ is the flood tide which comes up and fills all these creeks and covers all the mireand there is not a little creek nor a great bay but what this tide of Christs glorious merits fills all! Perhaps this thought may give you the meaning of the text, Your peace shall be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the seathe many waves which come up and cover all the sands and the mire of our iniquities till God sees no sin in us, because He sees the righteousness of Christ standing for usand looks upon us, not as we are separately, but as we stand in Himand so He makes us to be accepted in the Beloved. Oh, Believer, if you can wrap the righteousness of Christ around you, you can feel, then, the sweetness of the truth of our text, He is our peace.  
Yet once more. After His person and His righteousness, there comes His precious blood. Oh, Beloved, there is no balm for the soul like the Cross! Sometimes I like to sing to myself, when I get a little fluttered in my soul, that precious hymn   
*Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,   
Which before the Cross I spend!   
Life and health, and peace possessing,   
From the sinners dying Friend!   
Here it is I find my Heaven,   
While upon the Cross I gaze.   
Love I much? Im more forgiven   
Im a miracle of Grace.*   
I have sometimes used this simile and will use it again. If you ride through London, mile after mile, mile after mile, and see the great swarms of people, you say to yourself, I cannot make out how all these people are fed. I cannot see how there is always a meal for these four millions and more. But go off tomorrow morning and make a round of the great marketsthe cattle market, the meat markets, the fruit markets and I know not what besidesand now you say, I cannot make out where the people can be found to eat all this! How does such a tremendous mass of provisions of all kinds ever get consumed?   
You change your note directly. When you only looked at the peoples needs, you thought, How can they all be supplied? but when you look at the supply, you say, How can there be needs great enough for all this? So you look at your sins and you say, How can there be merit enough to put all these sins away? But if you will but look at the Son of God dying on the Cross for sinners, you will change your note and you will say, Where could there be sinners great enough to demand such an immense Sacrifice as the giving up of the life of the Son of God to redeem men from their iniquities? You must go to the Cross if you want to have peace concerning your sins, for He is our peace.   
Further, Beloved, the ever-living Christ is always our peace. The thought that there beats a heart in Heaven that is always loving us, that there moves a tongue in Heaven that always pleads for us, that there is an arm in Heaven that always fights for us and that there is a foot in Heaven that will be swift to run for our defenseoh, this is a precious consolation! If faith can but perceive that Jesus Christ is within the veil at the Fathers Throne, with His heart full of love towards those who trust in Him, then will He be to us our peace!   
I shall not, however, enlarge farther upon that point, though it is a very fruitful subject. But I must say that the more you know of Christs Character and work, the deeper will be your peace. Ignorant professors who do not know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, are sometimes afraid that the promises will not be fulfilled. But they must be fulfilled, for He is not only full of Grace, but of Truth! Know Christ and trust Himand you need not be afraid. Poverty shall not make you poor, sickness shall not make you diseased, death shall not make you die! You shall triumph over all these in your inmost soul and come off more than conqueror through Him who has loved you and is your peace!   
We have only as yet handled two words, but they are two big, colossal words. He is our peace.  
But we must now speak briefly upon those two diamond rivets which fasten Christ and peace together. So we look now at

III. WHOSE PEACE IS HE?   
Notice that word, our. He is our peace. To whom, then, is this splendid peace given? Every man that has Christ as his Savior! I have half a mind to ask those who have trusted Christ to be their peace, to say aloud, here and now, He is our peace. There is a gray-headed man here, and if he were to rise and lean on his staff, he could say, Yes, blessed be God, without doubt I can say that He is my peace. There is a valiant soldier of Christ yonder, and he would declare boldly, He is my peace. But I daresay there is some timid Hannah here who would wipe the tears from her face and quietly say, Yes, He is my peace. And there are some youngsters here, whom the Lord has but lately brought in, and they can say, tremblingly, but yet meaning it from their inmost souls, He is my peace. It is all the same, whether we are old or young, whether we are advanced in the Divine Life, or are only just in the beginning of itwe have no other peace except the Lord Jesus Christ!   
But who are these people who have Christ to be their peace? Well, they are those who could not get peace anywhere else, for we never come to Christ until we are driven to Him by stormy weather. He is such a blessed port that we might all wish to cast anchor in Him, but yet we are such fools that we keep out at sea as long as we canand only when we feel our sins to be like hurricanes howling in our ears, do we fly to Christ! Well, if you have nowhere else to go and you come to Him with all your hunger and nakednessand trust in Himwhether you sink or swim, then shall He be your peace!   
I cannot delay upon that, however, for our time is gone and, therefore, I must take that other wordis.   
IV. WHEN IS HE OUR PEACE?   
I know the world says, I hope He will be my peace. Dear Hearer, do not be satisfied with that! Never be content with may be, but seek after a present salvation! I was soundly enough asleep the other morning when, about half-past three my bell rang very sharply, and then rang again. And when I put my head out of the window to see who was there, I heard someone say, Oh, if you please, Sir, there is a poor man dying, and he wants to see you badly! Do come. Oh, yes, where does he live? I will be there as quickly as I can. And away I went.   
The dying man said to me, I beg your pardon, Sir, for sending for you at this time of night, but it is very hard for a man to go out of this world and not know where he is going. Do tell me the way I may be saved. I was glad enough to tell him about Him who is our peace, but how I wished and wished again that he had not needed to be told about it then! As I said to those who were round about him, Now see, he has enough to think of with his dying pains, without having to think of finding a Savior now! Oh, the rest of you seek Him while you have health and strength! And I now say that to you! You will find other work when you come to die without having to search for a Savior! Besides that, what a joy it is to get Christ nowto say, He is my peace. Why, there are some of us who are as happy now in Christ as we could well wish to be! We find that our religion is no misery to us. It is not a chain, but like the wings of a bird and it helps us to mount! We feel at perfect peace with God right now, and if Death were to come tonight, or tomorrow, or while we are sitting here, I trust we should not think of him as an adversary, but our Fathers servant, sent to take us into our Fathers Presence! Oh, my dear Hearers, some of you, when you come to dying, will, perhaps, have to think, I used to attend a Sunday school. I used to go to a place of worship, but I gave it all up when I came to London. When I got into business and had a family, I thought I needed Sunday for recreation, and so I neglected my soul, and now where am I? Far off from God! Oh, I hope I shall not have to come and tell you in your extremity about a Savior, but may you now receive Him! All that He asks of you is to trust Himand that He gives you! My poor friend said the other night, I cannot think, Sir. I cannot settle my thoughts. Yes, but you can think now and, therefore, now, before the evil days come and the dark night draws on, turn, turn! May God turn you! May effectual Grace lead you to see my bleeding Master with His five streaming wounds, with the crown of thorns about His brow, mocked and despised, and spit upon for us, that we might escape the thorn and not have to be wounded with the arrows of death, but might live through Him! May the Lord Jesus Christ be to everyone of you your peace tonight, that you may take the text and say, He is now, even tonight, our peace.   
God grant it for His names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 11:27-46.**

Our Lords greatest miracles were always the reward of faith. Verse 27. She said unto Him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come unto the world. By which she as good as said, I believe that and I believe everything else. I have an implicit faith in You. Whatever You say, whatever You have said or shall say, I am prepared to believe it all, for I believe in You. I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.   
28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and secretly called Mary, her sister. Because she knew that the Jews hated the Savior. She could not tell what would come of it if they knew of His coming, so she whispers to her   
28-30. Saying, The Master is come, and calls for you. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met Him. Their cemeteries were outside the town and probably the Savior was near the very grave where Lazarus slept.   
31-32. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goes unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died. Her thought was the same as the thought of Martha, but she did not say as much as Martha. She never did. Martha had a dialogue with the Savior, but Mary bowed at His feet.

33-37. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have you laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him! And some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself, came to the grave. Many have asked why Christ groaned. Why, Brothers and Sisters, it is the way in which He gives life by His own death! We sometimes say of one who does a great action, It took so much out of him. So it did out of the Savior. He must groan that Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus may rejoice. It is not without the stirring of His very life that He gives life to the dead!

38-39. It was a cave and the stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take you away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinks: for he has been dead four days. It were a pity to roll away the stone.

40-41. Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto you, that if you would believe, you should see the Glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. That is grand praying, is it not? Sometimes we ought to say, Just so. Father, I thank You that You have heard me.

42-44. And I knew that You hear Me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that You have sent Me. And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. He probably slipped himself off from the ledge in the tomb upon which he been laid and there he appeared before them bound so that he could not move farther.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

END OF VOLUME 59

Sermon #1388 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF   
NO. 1388

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Jesus Christ Himself.   
Ephesians 2:20.

Jesus Christ Himself is to occupy all our thoughts this morning. What an ocean opens up before me! Here is room in the sea for the largest ship! In which direction shall I turn your thoughts? I am embarrassed with riches. I know not where to beginand when I once begin, where shall I end? Assuredly we need not go abroad for joys this morning, for we have a feast at home! The words are few, but the meaning vastJesus Christ Himself. Beloved, the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ contains in it nothing so wonderful as Himself. It is a mass of marvels, but He is THE miracle of it! The wonder of wonders is The Wonderful Himself!

If proof is asked of the Truths of God which He proclaimed, we point men to Jesus Christ Himself. His Character is unique. We defy unbelievers to imagine another like He. He is God and yet Manand we challenge them to compose a narrative in which the two apparently incongruous characters shall be so harmoniously blendedin which the human and Divine shall be so marvelously apparent without the one overshadowing the other! They question the authenticity of the four Gospelswill they try and write a fifth? Will they even attempt to add a few incidents to the life which shall be worthy of the sacred biography and congruous with those facts which are already described?

If it is all a forgery, will they be so good as to show us how it is done? Will they find a novelist who will write another biography of a man of any century they choose, of any nationality, or of any degree of experience, or any rank or station and let us see if they can describe, in that imaginary life, a devotion, a self-sacrifice, a truthfulness, a completeness of character at all comparable to that of Jesus Christ Himself? Can they invent another perfect character even if the Divine element is left out? They must fail, for there is none like Jesus!

The Character of Jesus has commanded respect even from those who have abhorred His teaching. It has been a stumbling block to all objectors who have preserved a shade of candor. They could refute Jesus doctrine, they say. They boast they could improve His precepts. They claim His system is narrow and outworn. But what can they do with Him? They must admire Him even if they will not adore Himand having done so, they have admired a Person who must be Divineor else He willfully left His disciples to believe a lie. How do they surmount this difficulty? They cannot do so by railing at Him, for they have no material for accusation. Jesus Christ Himself silences their criticism!

This is a file at which these asps bite, but break their teeth. Beyond all argument or miracle, Jesus Christ Himself is the proof of His own Gospel. And as He is the proof of it, so, Beloved, He is the marrow and essence of it. When the Apostle Paul meant that the Gospel was preached, He said, Christ is preached, for the Gospel is Christ Himself! If you want to know what Jesus taught, know Him! He is the incarnation of that Truth of God which by Him and in Him is revealed to the sons of men. Did He not, Himself say, I am the way, the truth, and the life?

You have not to take down innumerable books, nor to pore over mysterious sentences of double meaning in order to know what our great Teacher has revealed. You have but to turn and gaze upon His countenance, behold His actions and note His spirit and you know His teaching. He lived what He taught. If we wish to know Him, we may hear His gentle voice saying, Come and see. Study His wounds and you understand His innermost philosophy. To know Him and the power of His Resurrection is the highest degree of spiritual learning. He is the end of the Law and the soul of the Gospeland when we have preached His Word to the fullest, we may close by saying, Now, of the things which we have spoken, this is the sumwe have an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Nor is He, alone, the proof of His Gospel and the substance of it, but He is the power and force by which it spreads. When a heart is truly broken of sin, it is by Him that it is bound up. If a man is converted, it is by Christ, the power of God. If we enter into peace and salvation, it is by the gracious manifestation of Jesus Himself. If men have enthusiastically loved Christianity, it is because, first of all, they loved Christ! Apostles labored for Him and for Him confessors were brave. For Him saints have suffered the loss of all things and for Him martyrs have died. The power which creates heroic consecration is Jesus Christ Himself. The memories stirred by His name have more influence over mens hearts than all things else in earth or Heaven. The enthusiasm which is the very life of our holy cause comes from Himself.

They who know not Jesus know not the life of truth, but those who dwell in Him are filled with power and overflow so that out of the midst of them streams forth living water! Nor is it only so, Beloved, for the power which propagates the Gospel is Jesus Himself. In Heaven He pleads and, therefore, does His Kingdom come. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. It is from Heaven that He rules all things so as to promote the advance of the Truth of God. All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth and, therefore, are we to proclaim His life-giving Word with full assurance of success.

He causes the wheels of Providence to revolve in such a manner as to help His cause. He abridges the power of tyrants, overrules the scourges of war, establishes liberty in nations, opens the mysteries of continents long unknown, breaks down systems of error and guides the current of human thought. He works by a thousand means preparing the way of the Lord. It is from Heaven that He shall shortly come and when He comes, when Christ Himself shall put forth all His might, then shall the wildernesses rejoice and the solitary places be glad! The reserve force of the Gospel is Christ Jesus Himself. The latent power which shall at last break every bond and win universal dominion is the energy, the life, the Omnipotence of Jesus Himself!

He sleeps in the vessel now, but when He arises and chides the storm there will be a deep calm. He now, for awhile, conceals Himself in the ivory palaces of Glory, but when He is manifested, in that day His chariot wheels shall bring victory to His Church militant. If these things are so, I have a theme before me which I cannot compass! I forbear the impossible task and I shall but briefly note some few apparent matters which lie upon the surface of the subject. Brethren, Jesus Christ Himself should always be the prominent thought of our minds as Christians! Our theology should be framed upon the fact that He is the Center and Head of all. We must remember that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Some of our Brothers are mainly taken up with the doctrines of the Gospel and are somewhat bitter in their narrow orthodoxy. We are to love every Word of our Lord Jesus and His Apostles and are to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, but yet it is always well to hold the Truth of God in connection with Jesus and not as in itself, alone, the sum of all things. Truth isolated from the Person of Jesus grows hard and cold. We know some in whom the slightest variation from their system arouses their indignation even though they admit that the Brother is full of the Spirit of Christ. It is with them doctrine, doctrine, doctrine whereas with us, I trust, it is Christ Himself! True doctrine is, to us priceless as a Throne for our living Lord. But our chief delight is not in the vacant Throne, but in the Kings Presence!

Give me not His garments, though I prize every thread, but the blessed Wearer whose sacred energy made even the hem to heal with a touch! There are others of our Brothers who delight above measure in what they call experimental preaching which sets forth the inner life of the Believer both the rage of depravity and the triumph of Grace. This is well in due proportion, according to the analogy of faith, but still, Jesus Himself should be more conspicuous than our experiences and feelings, doubts and fears, struggles and victories. We may get to study the action of our own hearts so much that we fall into despondency and despair. Looking unto Jesus is better than looking unto our own progress! Selfexamination has its necessary uses, but to have done with self and live by faith in Jesus Christ Himself is the best course for a Christian.

Then, there are others who rightly admire the precepts of the Gospel and are never so happy as when they are hearing them enforced, as, indeed, they ought to be. But after all, the commands of our Lord are not our Lord Himself, and they derive their value to us and their power over our obedience from the fact that they are His Words and that He said, If you love Me, keep My commandments. We know the truth of His declaration, If a man loves Me he will keep My sayings, but there must be the personal love to begin with! Brothers and Sisters, all the benefits of these three schools will be ours if we live upon Jesus Himself!

They each gather a flower, but our Divine plant of renown has all the beauty and all the fragrance of all that they can gatherand without the thorns which are so apt to grow on their peculiar roses. Jesus Christ Himself is to us precept, for He is the Way. He is to us doctrine, for He is the Truth. He is to us experience, for He is the Life. Let us make Him the pole star of our religious life in all things! Let Him be first, last and middle! Yes, let us say, He is all my salvation and all my desire. And yet do not, I beseech you, disdain the doctrine, lest marring the doctrine you should be guilty of insult to Jesus Himself. To trifle with the Truth of God is to despise Jesus as our Prophet.

Do not, for a moment, underrate experience, lest in neglecting the inner self, you also despise your Lord Himself as your cleansing Priest! And never for a moment forget His commandments, lest if you break them you transgress against Jesus Himself as your King. All things which touch upon His Kingdom are to be treated reverently by us for the sake of Himself. His Bible, His day, His Church, His ordinances must all be precious to us, because they have to do with Him. But in the forefront of all must always stand Jesus Christ Himself, the personal, living, loving Jesus! Christ in us the hope of Glory. Christ for us our full redemption. Christ with us our guide and our solace and Christ above us pleading and preparing our place in Heaven. Jesus Christ Himself is our Captain, our armor, our strength and our victory! We inscribe His name upon our banner, for it is Hells terror, Heavens delight and earths hope. We bear this upon our hearts in the heat of the conflict, for this is our breastplate and coat of mail.

I shall not endeavor to say anything this morning which will strike you as beautiful in language, for to endeavor to decorate the Altogether Lovely One would be blasphemy. To hang flowers upon the Cross is ridiculous and to endeavor to adorn Him whose head is as the finest gold and whose Person is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires would be profane. I shall but tell you simple things in simple languageyet are these the most precious and soul-satisfying of the Truths of Revelation.

I. With Jesus Christ Himself we begin by saying, first, that Jesus Himself is THE ESSENCE OF HIS OWN WORK and, therefore, how readily we ought to trust Him. Jesus Himself is the soul of His own salvation. How does the Apostle describe it? He loved me, and gave Himself for me. He gave His crown, His Throne and His joys in Heaven for us, but that was not allHe gave Himself. He gave His life on earth and renounced all the comforts of existence. He bore all its woes. He gave His body, He gave His agony, He gave His hearts bloodbut the summary of it is He gave Himself for me.

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. No proxy service here! No sacrifice which runs as far as His own Person and there stops! There was no limit to the grief of Jesus like that set upon the suffering of Job Only on himself lay not your hand, or, Only spare his life. No, every reserve was taken down, for He gave Himself. He saved others, Himself He could not save, because He Himself was the very essence of His own sacrifice on our behalf. It is because He is what He is that He was able to redeem us! The dignity of His Person imparted efficacy to His Atonement. He is Divine, God over all, blessed forever and, therefore, infinite virtue is found in Him.

He is Human and perfect in that humanity and, therefore, capable of obedience and suffering in mans place. He is able to save us because He is ImmanuelGod with us. If it were conceivable that an angel could have suffered the same agonies and have performed the same labors as our Lord, yet it is not conceivable that the same result would have followed. The pre-eminence of His Person imparted weight to His work. Always think, then, when you view the Atonement, that it is Jesus Himself who is the soul of it. Indeed the efficacy of His sacrifice lies there. Therefore the Apostle, in Hebrews, speaks of Him as having by Himself purged our sins. This purging was worked by His Sacrifice, but the sacrifice was Himself!

Paul says, He offered up Himself. He stood as a Priest at the altar offering a bloody Sacrifice, but the offering was neither bullock, nor ram, nor turtle doveit was Himself. Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The sole reason why we are well-pleasing with God is because of Him, for He is our sweetsmelling Offering. And the only cause for the putting away of our sin is found in Him because He is our Sin Offering. The cleansing by the blood and the washing by the water are the result, not of the blood and the water in and of themselves and separate from Him, but because they were the essentials of Himself. You see this, I am persuaded, without my enlarging upon it.

Now, because of this, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Object of our faith. Is He not always so described in Scripture? Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earthnot, Look to My Cross, nor, Look to My life, nor, to My death, much less, to My sacraments or to My servants, but, Look to ME. From His own lips the words sound forth, Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. In fact, it is the Christians life motto, Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. May I not go farther and say how very simple and how very easy and natural ought faith to be from now on?

I might be puzzled with various theories of the Atonement, but I can believe in Jesus Himself! I might be staggered by the many different mysteries which concern theology and overpower even masterminds, but I can confide in Jesus Himself! He is one whom it is difficult to distrustHis goodness, gentleness and truth command our confidence. We can and do trust in Jesus Himself! If He is proposed to me as my Savior, and if faith in Him is that which saves me, then at His dear feet I cast myself unreservedly and feel myself secure while He looks down on me. He who bled that sinners might be saved cannot be doubted any more! Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief.

Now you who have been looking to your faith, I want you to look to Jesus Himself rather than at your poor feeble faith. Now you who have been studying the results of faith in yourselves and are dissatisfied, I beseech you turn your eyes away from yourselves and look to Jesus Himself. Now

you who cannot understand this and cannot understand that, give up wanting to understand, for a while, and come and look at Jesus Christ Himself, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The Lord grant us Grace to view Jesus Christ Himself in the matter of our salvation as All in All, so that we may have personal dealings with Him and no longer think of Him as a mere idea, or as an historical personage, but as a personal Savior standing in the midst of us and bidding us enter into peace through Him!

II. Jesus Christ Himself is, as we have said, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL and, therefore, how closely should we study Him. While He was here He taught His disciples, and the object of His teaching was that they might know Himself and through Him might know the Father. They did not learn very fast, but you see what He meant them to learn by the observation He made to Philip, Have I been so long a time with you and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He meant them to know Himself and when He had risen from the dead the same objective was still before Him.

As He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus they had a wide choice of subjects for conversation, but He chose the old theme and, beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. No topic was half as important or profitable! No mere man may come to teach himself, but this Divine One can have nothing better to reveal, for He Himself, the Incarnate God, is the chief of all the Truths of God! Therefore our Lord was concerned to be known to His people and, therefore, again and again we read that, Jesus showed Himself unto His disciples.

Whatever else they may be ignorant of, it is essential to disciples that they know their Lord, His Nature, His Character, His mind, His Spirit, His objective, His powerwe must know in a wordwe must know Jesus Himself. This also, Beloved, is the work of the Holy Spirit. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Me, and shall show it unto you. The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us and in us. Whatever things Christ has spoken while He was here, the Holy Spirit opens to the mind and to the understanding. Thus by speaking of Christ within us, He carries on the work which our Lord began when here below. The Comforter is the Instructor and Jesus is the Lesson. I dare say you long to know a thousand things, but the main point of knowledge to be desired is Jesus Himself.

This was His teaching and this is the Holy Spirits teachingand this is the end and objective of the Bible. Moses, Isaiah and all the Prophets spoke of Himand the things which are recorded in this Book were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and, that believing, you might have life through His name. Precious is this Book, but its main preciousness lies in its revealing Jesus Himself. It is the field which contains the pearl of great price, the case which encloses Heavens brightest jewel. We have missed our way in the Bible if its silken clue has not led us to the central chamber where we see Jesus Himself!

We have never been truly taught of the Holy Spirit and we have missed the teaching of the life of Christ unless we have come to abide in Jesus Himself. To know Him is our beginning of wisdom and our crown of wisdom. To know Him is our first lesson on repentance and our last attainment as we enter Heaven. Our ambition is that we may know the love of Christ by which passes knowledge. Here is our life study and we have good in it, for these things the angels desire to look into. May the Lord grant that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Beloved, because Jesus is the sum of the Gospel, He must be our constant theme. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. So spoke men of old and so say we. When we have done preaching Christ we had better have done preachingwhen you have done teaching in your classes Jesus Christ Himself, give up Sunday school work, for nothing else is worthy of your pains. Put out the sun and light is gone, life is gone, all is gone. When Jesus is pushed into the background or left out of a ministers teaching, the darkness is darkness that might be felt and the people escape from it into Gospel light as soon as they can.

A sermon without Jesus in it is savorless and worthless to Gods tried saintsthey soon seek other food. The more of Christ in our testimony, the more of light and life and power to save. Some preachers are guilty of the most weary tautology, but this is not laid to their charge when their theme is Jesus! I have heard hearers declare that their minister appeared to have bought a barrel organ on which he could grind five or six tunes and no moreand these he ground out forever and ever, amen! They have been weary, very weary, of such vain repetitions. But to this day I never heard of anybody against whom the complaint was urged that he preached Christ too much, too often, too earnestly, or too joyfully!

I never recollect seeing a single Christian man coming out of a congregation with a sorrowful face saying, He extolled the Redeemer too highly. He grossly exaggerated the praises of our Savior. I do not remember ever meeting with a case in which the sick upon the bed of languishing have complained that thoughts of Jesus were burdensome to them. I never recollect that a single book has been denounced by earnest Christian men because it spoke too highly of the Lord and made Him too prominent. No, my Brethren, He who is the study of the saints must be the daily theme of ministers if they would feed the flock of God! No theme so moves the heart, so awakens the conscience, so satisfies the desires and so calms the fears. God forbid we should ever fail to preach Jesus Himself! There is no fear of exhausting the subject, nor of our driving away our hearers, for His words are still true, I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.

III. Jesus Christ Himself is THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE and how dear He should be. We can, all of us who are really saved, declare that, We love Him because He first loved us. We have an intense affection for His blessed Person as well as gratitude for His salvation. The personality of

Christ is a fact always to be kept prominently in our thoughts. The love of a truth is all very well, but the love of a person has far more power in it. We have heard of men dying for an idea, but it is infinitely more easy to awaken enthusiasm for a person.

When an idea becomes embodied in a man, it has a force which in its abstract form is never wielded. Jesus Christ is loved by us as the embodiment of everything that is lovely, true, pure and of good report. He Himself is incarnate perfection inspired by love. We love His offices, we love the types which describe Him, we love the ordinances by which He is set forthbut we love Himself best of all. He Himself is our Belovedour heart rests only in Him. Because we love Him we love His people and through Him we enter into union with them. Our text is taken from a verse which says, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. He is the binder at the corner, joining Jew and Gentile in one temple. In Jesus those ancient differences cease, for He has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace.

We are at one with every man who is at one with Christ. Only let our Lord say, I love that man, and we love him at once. Let us only hope that our friend can say, I love Jesus, and we hasten to respond, And I love you for Jesus sake. So warm is the fire of our love to Jesus that all His friends may sit at it and welcome! Our circle of affection comprehends all who in any shape or form have truly to do with Jesus Himself. Because we love Him we delight to render service to Him. Whatever service we do for His Church and for His Truth, we do for His sake. Even if we can only render it to the least of His brethren, we do it unto Him. The woman with the alabaster box of precious ointment is a type which we greatly prize, for she would only break the precious box for Himand every drop of its delicious contents must be poured only upon His head.

The bystanders complained of waste, but there can be no waste in anything that is done for Jesus. If the whole world, the heavens and the Heaven of heavens were all one great alabaster box, and if all the sweets which can be conceived were hidden within it, we would wish to see the whole broken, that every drop of the sweetness might be poured out for Jesus Christ Himself

*Jesus is worthy to receive   
Honor and power Divine.   
And blessings more than we can give   
Be, Lord, forever Thine.*

Oh our Beloved, if we can do anything for You, we are charmed at possessing such a privilege! If we are allowed to wash Your disciples feet, or to care for the poorest of Your poor, or the least lamb of Your flock, we accept the office as a high honor, for we love You with all our hearts!

Our love to Jesus should be as much a matter of fact as our affection for our husband, wife, or childand it should be far more influential upon our lives. Love to our Lord is, I trust, moving all of you to personal service. You might have paid a subscription and allowed others to work, but you cannot do it when you see that Jesus gave Himself for you. Jesus Himself demands that I, myself, should be consecrated to His praise. Personal service is due to a personal Christ who personally loved and personally died for us! When nothing moves us to zeal, the jaded spirit cannot follow up its industries unless Jesus Himself appears and straightway our passions are all on fire and the fiery spirit compels the flesh to warm to its work. We even glory in infirmity when Jesus is near! And we venture upon works which otherwise had seemed impossible! We can do anything and everything for Jesus Christ Himself.

IV. Fourthly, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is THE SOURCE OF ALL OUR JOY. We ought to rejoice when we have such a springing well of blessedness! In times of sorrow our solace is Jesus Himself. It is no small ground of comfort to a mourner that Jesus Himself is a Man. How cheering to read, For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, took part of the same. The humanity of Christ has a charm about it which only the quietly sorrowful discover. I have known what it is to gaze upon the Incarnation with calm repose of heart when my brain has seemed to be on fire with anguish.

If Jesus is, indeed, my Brother, there is hope at all times! This is better balm than that of Gilead, He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able, also, to succor them that are tempted. Pain, hunger, thirst, desertion, scorn and agony Jesus Himself has borne! Tempted in all like as we are, though without sin, He has become the Comforter of the sorrowful. Many and many a sufferer in the lone watches of the night has thought of Him and felt his strength renewed. Our patience revives when we see the Man of Sorrows silent before His accusers. Who can refuse to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His baptism?

*His way was much rougher and darker than mine. Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?*

The darkness of Gethsemane has been light to many an agonized soul and the passion, even unto death, has made the dying sing for joy of heart. Jesus Himself is the solace of our soul in sorrowand when we emerge from the storm of distress into the deep calm of peace, as we often doblessed be His name, He is our Peace! He left us peace by legacy and peace He creates in us. We never know deep peace of heart until we know the Lord Jesus Himself. Do you remember that sweet word when the disciples were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the JewsJesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, Peace be unto you? Jesus Himself, you see, brought the message, for nothing but His Presence could make it effectual!

When we see Him our spirit smells a sweet savor of rest. Where can an aching head find such another pillow as His bosom? On high days and holidays our spirits soar beyond restwe ascend into the Heaven of joy and exultationbut it is our Lords joy which is in us making our joy full. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord, and then are we, also, glad. By faith we see Jesus Himself enthroned and this has filled us with delight, for His glorification is our satisfaction. Him, also, has God highly exalted and given Him a name which is above every name. I care not what becomes of me so long as He is glorified!

The soldier dies happy when the shout of victory salutes his ear and his failing sight beholds his prince triumphant. What a joy to think that Jesus is risenrisen to die no more! The joy of Resurrection is superlative! What bliss to know that He has ascended, leading captivity captive! That He sits, now, enthroned in a happy state, and that He will come in all the glory of the Father to break His enemies in pieces as with a rod of iron! Here lies the grandest joy of His expectant Churchshe has in reserve a mighty thunder of hosannas for that auspicious day! If there is any joy to be had, O Christian, that is both safe and sweet, a joy of which none can know too much, it is to be found in Him whom as yet you see not, but in whom believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

We must tear ourselves away from that thought to turn to another, but assuredly it is rich in happy memories and in blessed expectations.  
V. Fifthly, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE MODEL OF OUR LIFE and, therefore, how blessed it is to be like He. As to our rule for life, we are like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah had vanished, for we see no man save Jesus only. Every virtue found in other men we find in Him in greater perfection! We admire the Grace of God in them, but Jesus Himself is our pattern. It was once said of Henry VIII, by a severe critic, that if the characteristics of all the tyrants that had ever lived had been forgotten, they might all have been seen come to life in that one king. We may more truly say of Jesus, if all graces, virtues and sweetnesses which have ever been seen in good men could all be forgotten, you might find them all in Himfor in Him dwells all that is good and great.   
We, therefore, desire to copy His Character and put our feet into His footprints. Be it ours to follow the Lamb wherever He goes! What says our Lord Himself? Follow Me, and again, Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. Not Christs Apostle, but Christ Himself is our guide! We may not take a secondary model, but must imitate Jesus Himself. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His gracious operations, we are developing into the image of Christ till Christ is formed in us. And we thus develop because the heavenly life in us is His own life. I in them, said He. And again, I am the life. For we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life.   
It is not passing through Baptism, nor bearing the name of Christit is having Jesus Himself in our hearts that makes us Christiansand in proportion as He is formed in us and the new life grows, we become more and more like He. And this is our prospect for eternity, that we are to be with Him and like He, for when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Think of Him, you that mourn your imperfectness todaythink of Jesus Christ Himselfand then be assured that you are to be like He is! What a picture! Come, artist, bring your best skill! What can you do? All pencils fail to depict Him. It needs a poets eye as well as an artists hand to picture the Lovely One.   
But what can the poet do? Ah, you, also, fail. You cannot sing Him any more than your friend can paint Him. Fruitful conception and soaring imagination may come to your aid, but they cannot prevent your failure! He is too beautiful to be describedHe must be seen. Yet here comes the marvelWe shall be like He islike Jesus Christ Himself! O saint, when you are risen from the dead how lovely you will be! Will you know yourself? Today you are wrinkled with old age, scarred with the marks of disease and pain. Perhaps you are deformed by accident, or blanched with consumptionbut none of these shall blemish you then! You will be without spot or wrinkle, faultless before the Throne

*O glorious hour!   
O blessed abode!   
I shall be near   
And like my God!*   
And not only in bodily form shall we be like He is whose eyes are as the eyes of doves and whose cheeks are as beds of spicesbut in spirit and in soul shall we be perfectly conformed to the Well-Beloved! We shall be holy, even as He is holy and happy as He is happy. We shall enter into the joy of our Lordthe joy of Jesus Himself! I dont say that we can be Divine that cannot bebut still, Brothers and Sisters, we shall be very near the Throne. O what rapture to know that my next of kin lives and when He shall stand, in the last day, upon the earth, I shall not only see God in this, my flesh, but I shall be like He is, for I shall see Him as He is! Christ Himself, then, becomes to us unspeakably precious, as the model of our present life and the image of the perfection towards which the Holy Spirit is working us.   
VI. Lastly, HE IS THE LORD OF OUR SOUL. How sweet it will be to with Him. We find, today, that His beloved company makes us move pleasantly whether we run in the way of His commands or the valley of the shadow of death. Saints have lain in dungeons and yet they have walked at liberty when He has been there! They have been stretched on the rack and even called it a bed of roses when He has stood by. One lay on a gridiron, with the hot fires beneath him, but amidst the flames he challenged his tormentors to do their worst! He laughed them to scorn, for his Lord was there!   
Martyrs have been seen to clap their hands when every finger burned like a lighted candle and they have been heard to cry, Christ is All, Christ is All! When the Fourth, like unto the Son of God, walks in the furnace, all the fire can do is but snap their bonds and set the sufferers free! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I am sure your only happiness that has been worth having has been found in knowing that He loved you and was near you! If you have ever rejoiced in the abundance of your corn and wine and oil, it has been a sorry joyit has soon palled upon your taste it never touched the great deeps of your spirit and soon it has gone and left you sorely wearied in heart.   
If you have rejoiced in your children, your kinsfolk and your bodily health, how readily has God sent a blight upon them all. But when you have rejoiced in Jesus, you have heard a voice bidding you proceed to further delights! That voice has cried, Drink, O Friends, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved. To be inebriated with such joy as this is to come to the best condition of mind and to fix the soul where it should be! We are never right till we come out of ourselves and into Jesus. But when the ecstatic state comes and we stand right out of self and stand in Him so that whether in the body or out of the body we can scarcely tell, God knows! Then are we getting back to where God meant man to have been when He walked with him in Edengetting near to where God means we shall be when we shall see Him face to face!   
Brethren, what must the unveiled vision be! If the sight of Him, here, is so sweet, what must it be to see Him hereafter! It may be we shall not live till He comes, for the Master may tarry. But if He does not come and we, therefore, are called to pass through the gate of Death, we need not fear! I should not wonder if when we pass under the veil and come out in the disembodied state, one of our astonishments will be to find Jesus Himself there waiting to receive us! The soul hoped that a convoy of ministering angels would be near the bed and would escort it across the stream and up the mountains to the Celestial Citybut no, instead thereofour spirit will be saluted by the Lord Himself!   
Will it be amazed and cry, It is He, even He, my best Beloved, Jesus Himself! He has come to meet me! Heaven might have been too great a surprise. Even my disembodied spirit might have swooned away, but it is He, the Man Christ Jesus whom I trusted down below and who was the dear companion of my dying hours! I have changed my place and state, but I have not changed my Friend nor changed my joy, for here He is. What a glance of love will that be which He will give to us and which we shall return to Him! Shall we ever take our eyes away from Him? Shall we ever wish to do so? Will not the poets words be true   
*Millions of years my wondering eyes,   
Shall over Your beauties rove.   
And endless ages Ill adore   
The glories of Your love.*   
Within a week it may be our meeting with Jesus Himself may take place! Perhaps within an hour! A poor girl lying in the hospital was told by the doctor or the nurse that she could only live another hour. She waited patiently and when there remained only one quarter of an hour more, she exclaimed, One more quarter of an hour and thenshe could not say what! Neither can Ibut Jesus Himself has said, Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am that they may behold My Glory. And as He has prayed, so shall it be and so let it be! Amen and Amen.

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THE TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH   
NO 267

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 14, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

In whom you also are built together for an   
habitation of God through the Spirit.   
Ephesians 2:22.

UNDER the old Mosaic dispensation God had a visible dwelling place among men. The bright Shekinah was seen between the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the Mercy Seat. And in the tabernacle while Israel journeyed in the wilderness and in the temple afterwards, when they were established in their own land, there was a visible manifestation of the Presence of Jehovah in the place which was dedicated to His service. Now, everything under the Mosaic dispensation was but a type, a picture, a symbol, of something higher and nobler. That form of worship was, as it were, a series of shadow pictures, of which the Gospel is the substance. It is a sad fact, however, that there is so much Judaism in all our hearts, that we frequently go back to the old beggarly elements of the Law, instead of going forward and seeing in them a type of something spiritual and heavenly, to which we ought to aspire.

It is disgraceful to the present century to hear some men talk as they do. They had better at once espouse the Jewish creed. I mean it is disgraceful to hear some men speak as they do with regard to religious edifices. I remember to have heard a sermon once upon this textIf any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy. And the first part of the sermon was occupied with a childish anathema against all who should dare to perform any unhallowed act in the Churchyard, or who should lean the pole of a tent during the fair of the coming week against any part of that edifice, which, it seemed to me, was the god of the man who occupied the pulpit.

Is there such a thing as a holy place anywhere? Is there any spot wherein God now particularly dwells? I know not. Listen to the words of Jesus, Believe Me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour comes and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him. Remember, again, the saying of the Apostle at Athens, God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwells not in temples

made with hands.

When men talk of holy places they seem to be ignorant of the use of language. Can Holiness dwell in bricks and mortar? Can there be such a thing as a sanctified steeple? Can it possibly happen that there can be such a thing in the world as a moral window or a godly door post? I am lost in amazement, utterly lost, when I think how addled mens brains must be when they impute moral virtues to bricks and mortar and stones and stained glass. Pray how deep does this consecration go and how high? Is every crow that flies over the edifice at that time in solemn air? Certainly it is as rational to believe that, as to conceive that every worm that is eating the body of an Episcopalian is a consecrated worm and therefore there must necessarily be a brick wall, or a wide gravel path to protect the bodies of the sanctified from any unhallowed worms that might creep across from the Dissenters side of the cemetery.

I say again, such childs play, such Popery, such Judaism, is a disgrace to the century. And yet, notwithstanding, we all find ourselves at many times and seasons indulging in it. That at which you have just now smiled is but pushing the matter a little further, an error into which we may very readily descend. It is but an extravaganza of an error into which we all of us are likely to fall. We have a reverence for our plain Chapels. We feel a kind of comfort when we are sitting down in the place which somehow or other we have got to think must be holy.

Now let, us if we can, and perhaps it takes a great sturdiness and independence of mind to do itlet us drive away once and forever, all idea of holiness being connected with anything but with a conscious active agent. Let us get rid once and forever of all superstitions with regard to place. Depend upon it, one place is as much consecrated as another and wherever we meet with true hearts reverently to worship God, that place becomes for the time being Gods House. Though it is regarded with the most religious awe, that place which has no devout heart within it is no House of God. It may be a house of superstition, but a House of God it cannot be.

But, still, says one, God has a habitation. Does not your text say so? Yes and of that House of God I am about to speak this morning. There is such a thing as a House of God. But that is not an inanimate structure, but a living and a spiritual temple. In whom, that is Christ, you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. The House of God is built with the living stones of converted men and women and the Church of God, which Christ has purchased with His bloodthis is the Divine edifice and the structure wherein God dwells even to this day. I would, however, make one remark with regard to places in which we worship. I do think, albeit that there can be no sanctity of superstition connected with them, there is at the same time, a kind of sacredness of association. In any place where God has blessed my soul, I feel that it is one other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven.

It is not because the stones are hallowed, but because there I have met with God and the recollections that I have of the place consecrate it to me, That place where Jacob laid him down to sleep, what was it but his sleeping chamber for the time being, but his sleeping chamber was none other than the House of God? You have rooms in your houses, I hope, and closets there more sacred in truth than any gorgeous cathedral that ever lifted its spire to Heaven. Where we meet with God there is a sacredness, not in the place but in the associations connected with it. Where we hold fellowship with God and where God makes bare His arm, though it is in a barn or a hedgerow, or on a moor, or on a mountain side, there is Gods House to us. And the place is consecrated at once, but yet not so consecrated as that we may regard it with superstitious awe, but only consecrated by our own recollections of blessed hours which we have spent there in hallowed fellowship with God.

Leaving that out of the question, I come to introduce you to the house which God has built for His habitation. We shall regard the Church this morning thusfirst, as a building. Secondly, as a habitation. And thirdly, as what she is soon to become, namelya glorious temple.

I. First, then, we shall regard the Church as A BUILDING. And here let us pause to ask the question first of all what is a Churchwhat is the Church of God?

One sect claims the title for itself of the Church, while other denominations hotly contend for it. It belongs to none of us. The Church of God consists not of any one particular denomination of men. The Church of God consists of those whose names are written in the book of Gods eternal choice. The men who were purchased by Christ upon the tree, the men who are called of God by His Holy Spirit and who being quickened by that same Spirit partake of the life of Christ and become members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. These are to be found in every denomination all sorts of Christians. Some stray ones where we little dreamed of themhere and there a member of the Church of God hidden in the midst of the darkness of accursed Rome. Now and then, as if by chance, a member of the Church of Christ, connected with no sect whatever, far away from all connection with his Brethren, having scarcely heard of their existence yet still knowing Christ, because the life of Christ is in him.

Now this Church of Christ, the people of God, throughout the world, by whatever name they may be known, are in my text compared to a building in which God dwells. I must now indulge in a little allegory with regard to

this building. The Church is not a heap of stones shot together. She is a building. Of old her architect devised her. Methinks I see Him, as I look back into old eternity making the first outline of His Church. Here said He in His eternal wisdom, shall be the Cornerstone and there shall be the pinnacle. I see Him ordaining her length and her breadth, appointing her gates and her doors with matchless skill, devising every part of her and leaving no single portion of the structure unmapped. I see Him, that mighty Architect, also choosing to Himself every stone of the building, ordaining its size and its shapesettling upon His mighty plan the position each stone shall occupy, whether it shall glitter in front, or be hidden in the back, or buried in the very center of the wall.

I see him marking not merely the bare outline, but all the structure itself. All being ordained, decreed and settled in the Everlasting Covenant, which was the Divine plan of the mighty Architect upon which the Church is to be built. Looking on, I see the Architect choosing a cornerstone. He looks to Heaven and there are the angels, those glittering stones. He looks at each one of them from Gabriel downbut, said He, None of you will suffice. I must have a cornerstone that will support all the weight of the building, for on that stone every other one must lean. Gabriel, you will not suffice! Raphael you must lay by. I cannot build with you. Yet it was necessary that a stone should be found and one, too, that should be taken out of the same quarry as the rest. Where was he to be discovered? Was there a man who would suffice to be the cornerstone of this mighty building? Ah no! Neither Apostles, Prophets, nor teachers would. Put them altogether and they would be as a foundation of quicksand and the house would totter to its fall.

Mark how the Divine mind solved the difficultyGod shall become Man, very man and so He shall be of the same substance as the other stones of the temple, yet shall He be God and therefore strong enough to bear all the weight of this mighty structure, the top whereof shall reach to Heaven. I see that Cornerstone laid. Is there singing at the laying of it? No. There is weeping there. The angels gathered round at the laying of this first stone. Sad, look you men, and wonderthe angels weep! The harps of Heaven are clothed in sackcloth and no song is heard. They sang together and shouted for joy when the world was made, why shout they not now?

Look here and see the reason. That stone is imbedded in blood, that Cornerstone must lie nowhere else but in His own gore. The vermilion cement drawn from His own sacred veins must imbed it. And there He lies, the first stone of the Divine edifice. Oh, begin your songs afresh, you angels, it is over now. The Cornerstone is laid. The terrible ceremony is complete and now, from where shall we gather the stones to build this temple? The first is laid, where are the rest? Shall we go and dig into the sides of Lebanon? Shall we find these precious stones in the marble quarries of kings? No. Where are you flying, you laborers of God? Where are you going? Where are the quarries? And they replyWe go to dig in the quarries of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the depths of sinful Jerusalem and in the midst of erring Samaria.

I see them clear away the rubbish. I mark them as they dig deep into the earth and at last they come to these stones. But how rough, how hard, how unhewn! Yes, but these are the stones ordained of old in the Decree and these must be the stones and none other. There must be a change effected. These must be brought in and shaped and cut and polished and put into their places. I see the workmen at their labor. The great saw of the Law cuts through the stone and then comes the polishing chisel of the Gospel. I see the stones lying in their places and the Church is rising. The ministers, like wise master-builders, are there running along the wall, putting each spiritual stone in its place. Each stone is leaning on that massive Cornerstone and every stone depending on the blood and finding its security and its strength in Jesus Christ, the Cornerstone, elect and precious.

Do you see the building rise as each one of Gods chosen is brought in, called by grace and quickened? Do you mark the living stones as in sacred love and holy brotherhood they are knit together? Have you ever entered the building and noticed how these stones lean one upon another, bearing each others burden and so fulfilling the law of Christ? Do you mark how the Church loves Christ and how the members love each other? How first the Church is joined to the Cornerstone and then each stone bound to the next and the next to the next, till the whole building becomes one? Lo, The structure rises and it is complete and at last it is built.

And now open wide your eyes and see what a glorious building this is the Church of God. Men talk of the splendor of their architecturethis is architecture, indeedneither after Grecian nor Gothic modelsbut after the model of the sanctuary which Moses saw in the holy mountain. Do you see it? Was there ever a structure so comely as thisinstinct with life in every part? Upon one stone shall be seven eyes and each stone full of eyes and full of hearts. Was ever a thought so massive as thisa building built of soulsa structure made of hearts? There is no house like a heart for one to repose in. There a man may find peace in his fellow man. But here is the house where God delights to dwellbuilt of living hearts, all beating with holy lovebuilt of redeemed souls, chosen of the Father, bought with the blood of Christ.

The top of it is in Heaven. Part of them are above the clouds. Many of the living stones are now in the pinnacle of Paradise. We are here below, the building rises, the sacred masonry is heaving and, as the Cornerstone rises, so all of us must rise until at last the entire structure from its foundation to its pinnacle shall be heaved up to Heaven and there shall it stand foreverthe new Jerusalemthe temple of the majesty of God!

With regard to this building I have just a remark or two to make before I come to the next point. Whenever architects devise a building they make mistakes in forming the plan. The most careful will omit something. The most clever find in some things he has been mistaken. But mark the Church of God. It is built according to rule and compass and square and it shall be found at last that there has not been one mistake. You, perhaps, my dear Brother, are a little stone in the temple and you are apt to think you ought to have been a great one. There is no mistake about that. You have but one talent. That is enough for you. If you had two you would spoil the building. You are placed perhaps in a position of obscurity and you are saying, Oh that I were prominent in the Church! If you were prominent you might be in a wrong place. And but one stone out of its place in architecture so delicate as that of God, would mar the whole.

You are where you ought to bestay there. Depend on it there is no mistake. When at last we shall go round about her, mark her walls and tell her bulwarks, we shall each of us be compelled to say, How glorious is this Zion! When our eyes shall have been enlightened and our hearts instructed, each part of the building will command our admiration. The topstone is not the foundation, nor does the foundation stand at the top. Every stone is of the right shape. The whole material is as it should be and the structure is adapted for the great end, the glory of God, the temple of the Most High. Infinite wisdom, then, may be remarked in this building of God.

Another thing may be noticed, namely, her impregnable strength. This habitation of God, this house which is not made with hands, but is of Gods building, has often been attacked, but it has never been taken. What multitudes of enemies have battered against her old ramparts! But they have battered in vain. The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together, but what happened? They came against her, all of them with mighty men, each man with his sword drawn, but what became of them? The Almighty scattered kings in Hermon like snow in Salmon. As the snow is driven from the mountain side before the stormy blast, even so did You drive them away, O God and they melted before the breath of Your nostrils

*Then should our souls in Zion dwell, Nor fear the rage of Rome or Hell.*

The Church is not in danger and she never can be. Let her enemies come, she can resist. Her passive majesty, her silent rocky strength, bids them defiance now. Let them come on and break themselves in pieces, let them dash themselves against her and learn the ready road to their own destruction. She is safe and she must be safe even unto the end. Thus much, then, we can say of the structure. It is built by infinite wisdom and it is impregnably secure.

And we may add, it is glorious for beauty. There was never structure like this. One might feast his eyes upon it from dawn to eve and then begin again. Jesus Himself takes delight in it. So pleased is God in the architecture of His Church, that He has rejoiced with His Church as He never did with the world. When God made the world He heaved the mountains and dug the seas and covered its valleys with grass. He made all the fowls of the air and all the beasts of the field. Yes, and He made man in His own image and when the angels saw it, they sang together and they shouted for joy. God did not sing. There was no sufficient theme of song for Him that was Holy, holy, holy. He might say it was very good. There was a goodness of fitness about it, but not moral goodness of holiness. But when God built His Church He did sing. And that is the most extraordinary passage, I sometimes think, in the whole Word of God, where He is represented as singingYour Redeemer in the midst of you is mighty, He will save, He will rest in His love, He will rejoice over you with singing (Zeph. 3:17).

Think, my Brethren, of God Himself looking at His Churchand so fair and beautiful is the structure that He sings over His work and as each stone is put in its place, Divinity itself sings! Was ever song like that? Oh, come, let us sing, let us exalt the name of God togetherpraise Him who praises His Churchwho has made her to be His peculiar dwelling place.

Thus, then, have we in the first place regarded the Church as a building.  
II. But the true glory of the Church of God consists in the fact that she is not only a building, but that she is A HABITATION. There may be great beauty in an uninhabited structure, but there is always a melancholy thought connected with it. In riding through our country, we often come upon a dismantled tower, or castle. It is beautiful, but it is not a thing of joy. There is a sorrowful reflection connected with it. Who loves to see desolate palaces? Who desires that the land should cast out her sons and that her houses should fail of tenants?   
But there is joy in a house lit up and furnishedwhere there is the sound of men. Beloved, the Church of God has this for her peculiar glory, that she is a tenanted house, that she is a habitation of God through the Spirit. How many Churches there are that are houses, yet not habitations! I might picture to you a professed Church of God. It is built according to square and compass, but its model has been formed in some ancient creed and not in the Word of God. It is precise in its discipline according to its own standard and accurate in its observances according to its own model. You enter that Church, the ceremony is imposing. The whole service perhaps attracts you for a while. But you go out of that place conscious that you have not met with the life of God therethat it is a house, but a house without a Tenant. It may be professedly a Church, but it is not a Church possessing the indwelling of the Holy One.   
It is an empty house that must soon be dilapidated and fall. I do fear that this is true of many of our Churches, Established and Dissenting, as well as Romanist. There are too many Churches that are nothing but a mass of dull, dead formality. There is no life of God there. You might go to worship with such a people, day after day and your heart would never beat more quickly, your blood would never leap in its veins, your soul would never be refreshed, for it is an empty house. Fair may be the architecture of the structure, but empty is its storehouse, there is no table spread, there is no rejoicing, no killing of the fatted calf, no dancing, no singing for joy.   
Beloved, let us take heed, lest our Churches become the same, lest we be combinations of men without spiritual life and consequently houses uninhabited, because God is not there. But a true Church, that is visited by the Spirit of God, where conversion, instruction, devotion and the like, are carried on by the Spirits own living influencessuch a Church has God for its Inhabitant.   
And now we will just turn over this sweet thought. A Church built of living souls is Gods own house. What is meant by this? I reply, a house is a place where a man solaces and comforts himself. Abroad we do battle with the worldthere we strain every nerve and sinew that we may stem a sea of troubles and may not be carried away by the stream. Abroad, among men, we meet those of strange language to us, who often cut us to the heart and wound us to the quick. We feel that there we must be upon our guard. We could often say, My soul is among lions. I lie even among those that are set on fire of Hell. Going abroad in the world we find but little rest but the days work donewe go homeand there we solace ourselves. Our weary bodies are refreshed.   
We throw away the armor that we have been wearing and we fight no more. We see no longer the strange face, but loving eyes beam upon us. We hear no language now which is discordant in our ears. Love speaks and we reply. Our home is the place of our solace, our comfort and our rest. Now, God calls the Church His habitationHis home. See him abroad. He is hurling the thunderbolt and lifting up His voice upon the waters. Hearken to Him. His voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon and makes the hinds to calve. See Him when He makes war, riding the chariot of His might, He drives the rebellious angels over the battlements of Heaven down to the depth of Hell. Behold Him as he lifts Himself in the majesty of His strength!   
Who is this that is glorious? It is God, most high and terrible. But look, He lays aside His glittering sword. His spear He bears no longer. He comes back to His home. His children are about Him. He takes His solace and His rest. Yes, think not I venture too farHe shall rest in His lover and He does do it. He rests in His Church. He is no longer a consuming fire, a terror and a flame. Now, is He love and kindness and sweetness, ready to hear the prattle of His childrens prayer and the disjointed notes of His childrens song. Oh how beautiful is the picture of the Church as Gods House, the place in which He takes His solace! For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell. For I have desired it.   
Furthermore, a mans home is the place where he shows his inner self. You meet a man at the market, he deals sharply with you. He knows with whom he has to deal and he acts with you as a man of the world. You see him again at home, talking with his children and you say, What a different man! I could not have believed it was the same being. Mark, again, the professor in his chair. He is instructing students in science. Mark his sternness as he speaks upon recondite themes. Would you believe that that same man will in the evening have his little one upon his knee and will tell it childish tales and repeat the ballads of the nursery? And yet it is even so. See the king as he rides through the street in his pomp. Thousands gather round himacclamation rends the sky. With what majestic port he bears himself! He is all king, every inch a monarch, as he towers in the midst of the multitude.   
Have you seen the king at home? He is then just like other men. His little ones are about him. He is on the floor with them in their games. Is this the king? Yes, it is even he. But why did he not do this in his palace?in the streets? Oh, no, that was not his home. It is in his home that a man unbends himself. Even so with regard to our glorious Godit is in His Church that He manifests Himself as He does not unto the world. The mere worldling turns his telescope to the sky and he sees the pomp of God in the stars and he says, O God, how infinite are You. Devoutly he looks across the sea and beholds it lashed with tempest and he says, Behold the might and majesty of the Deity! The anatomist dissects an insect and discovers in every part of it Divine wisdom and he says, How wise is God! Yes. But it is only the Believer who, as he kneels in his chamber, can say, My Father made all these, and then can say, Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name.   
There are sweet revelations which God makes in His Church, which He never makes anywhere else. It is there He takes the children to His bosom. It is there He opens His heart and lets His people know the fountains of His great soul and the might of His infinite affection. And is it not a sweet thing to think of God at home with His family, happy in the house of His Church?   
But yet, furthermore, another thought strikes me now. A mans home is the center of all he does. Yonder is a large farm. Well, there are outhouses and hay racks and barns and the like. But just in the middle of these there is the housethe center of all husbandry. No matter how much wheat there may be, it is to the house the produce goes. It is for the maintenance of the household that the husband carries on his husbandry. You may hear the cattle lowing yonder, you may mark the sheep upon the hills, but the fleece comes home and the full udders must yield the milk for the children of the house, for the house is the center of all. Every river of industry comes down towards the sweet soft inland lake of home.

Now Gods Church is Gods center! He is abroad in the world, He is busy here and there and everywherebut to what does all His business tend? To His Church. Why does God clothe the hills with plenty? For the feeding of His people! Why is Providence revolving? Why those wars and tempests and then again this stillness and calm? It is for His Church. Not an angel divides the ether who has not a mission for the Church. It may be indirectly, but nevertheless truly so. There is not an archangel that fulfils the behests of the Most High but really carries the Church upon his broad wings and bears up her children lest they dash their feet against a stone. The storehouses of God are for His Church. The depths beneath of hidden treasure, of Gods unutterable richesall these are for His people. There is nothing which He has from His blazing crown to the darkness that is beneath His throne, that is not for His redeemed. All things must minister and work together for good for the chosen Church of God which is His houseHis daily habitation. I think if you will turn that over and over again, when you are away, you will see there is much in the beautiful fact that as the house is the center, so is the Church the center of everything with God.   
One other thought and I will have done. We have heard much talk of late about the French invasion. I shall begin to be alarmed about it when I see it, but certainly not till then. However, there is one thing we may say pretty safely. We are many of us peaceable men and would not like to wield the sword. The first sight of blood would sicken uswe are peaceful beingswe are not for fighting and war. But let the most peaceful man imagine that the invader has landed on our shore, that our houses are in danger and our homes about to be sacked by the foe, our conscientiousness, I fear, would give way. Notwithstanding all we might say about the wrongness of war, I query whether there is a man among us who would not take such weapon as he could find next to hand to repel the enemy. With this for our war cry, Our hearths and our homes, we would rush upon the invader, be he who he may or what he may.   
There is no might so tremendous that it could paralyze our armuntil we were frozen in deathwe would fight for our homes. There would be no command so stern that it could quiet us. We should break through every band and bond and the weakest of us would be a giant and our women would become heroines in the day of difficulty. Every hand would find its weapon to hurl at the invader. We love our homes and we must and will defend them. Yes, and now lift up your thoughtsthe Church is Gods homewill He not defend it? Will He suffer His own house to be sacked and stormed? Shall the hearth of Divinity be stained with the blood of His children? Shall it be that the Church is overthrown and her battlements stormed, her peaceful habitations given up to fire and sword?   
No, nevernot while God has a heart of love and while He calls His people His own house and His habitation. Come, let us rejoice in this our security. Let earth be all in arms abroad, we dwell in perfect peace, for our Father is in the house and He is God Almighty. Let them come on against us, we need not fear, His arm shall fell them, the breath of His nostrils shall blast them, a word shall destroy them, they shall melt away like the fat of rams, as fat of lambs shall they be consumed, into smoke shall they consume away. All these thoughts seem to me naturally to arise from the fact that the Church is Gods habitation.  
III. I was about to show you in the third place, that the Church is, byand-by, to be GODS GLORIOUS TEMPLE. It does not yet appear what she shall be. I have, however, already mentioned this precious fact. The Church is rising today and she shall continue to rise until the mountain of the Lords house shall be established upon the top of the mountains. And then, when all nations shall call her blessed and Him blessed, too when they shall all say, Come and let us go up to the House of our God that we may worship Him, then shall the Churchs glory begin. When this earth shall pass away, when all the monuments of empires shall be dissolved and run down in the common lava of the last burning, then shall the Church be caught up in the clouds and afterwards be exalted to Heaven itself, to become a temple such as eye has not seen.   
And now, Brothers and Sisters, in conclusion I make these remarks. If the Church of God is Gods House, what should you and I do? Why, we should earnestly seek to be a part of that temple. Let us not grieve His Spirit lest He leave His Church for awhile. Above all let us not be hypocrites lest He never come into our hearts at all. And if the Church is Gods temple and Gods House, let us not defile it. If you defile yourself you defile the Church, for your sin, if you are a Church member is the Churchs sin. The defilement of one stone in the building virtually mars its perfection. Take care that you are holy even as He is holy. Let not your heart become a house for Belial. Think not that God and the devil can dwell in the same habitation. Give yourself wholly to God. Seek for more of His Spirit, that as a living stone you may be wholly consecrated.   
And never be content unless you feel in yourself the perpetual presence of the Divine Inhabitant who dwells in His Church. May God now bless every living stone of the temple. And as for you that as yet are not hewn out of the quarries of sin, I pray that Divine Grace may meet with you, that you may be renewed and converted and at last be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light.

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A GRATEFUL SUMMARY OF TWENTY VOLUMES   
NO. 1209

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.   
Ephesians 3:8.

THIS is a very remarkable day for me, for if I am spared to preach this present sermon, I shall have completed 20 years of printed discourses issued week by week. This will be the last sermon of my 20th volume, making 1,209 in all. This is by no means a common occurrence. Indeed, I have not heard of another case in which for so long a time published discourses have been welcomed by the Christian Church and scattered broadcast over the land. Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day testifying the Gospel of Christ Jesus. For this I magnify the name of the Lord and ask my dear friends associated with me to assist me in the expression of my thankfulness to Almighty God for such special lovingkindness.

I could not find, even in the rich volume of Inspiration, any language more expressive of the deep emotions of my soul than the verse which is now before us, Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unspeakable riches of Christ. How long or how short the time allotted to my future ministry may be, I do not wish to know. Whether I shall complete another 20 years or become silent in a few months, for these 20 years of blessed assistance in the ministration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ I must, and will, adore the name of the Lord, even if never again He should permit me to open my lips in His service. It is enough of mercy for one man to have enjoyed, even if there were no more to follow. Bless the Lord, O my Soul!

While we shall consider the verse as Pauls own expression, we shall retain our own hold upon it, and use it very much as a summary of our own emotions. Note from the text that Paul thought very little of himself. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, he says, is this Grace given. I am sure Paul was never guilty of mock modesty and never pretended to be more humble than he really was. At suitable times he could vindicate himself and claim his position among his fellow men. If any denied his Apostleship, he proved it by abundant arguments. Yes, he even became, on one occasion, what he calls a fool in gloryinghe recounted his abundant labors and his frequent sufferingshe pointed to his success and protested that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles though he was nothing!

Although all this was true and Paul expressed only the bare truth when he thus defended himself, yet in his heart of hearts he chose to take the lowest seat in the lowest room. And because there were no adjectives in correct language which could express his opinion of himself, he did violence to language and said that he was less than the least of all saints. His straining of words is not to be censured, for language was made for man and not man for language. And when, within the bounds of grammar, a mighty heart cannot express itself, it does well to snap the bonds and let its strength have space to exercise itself.

I do not quarrel with Pauls language, but I do dispute his right to push me out of my place! Less than the least is a position which I had hoped to occupy, but he has taken it from me and I would gladly give him a touch on the shoulder and say, Friend, go up higher. For as there are no lower seats and we could not think of sitting above the great Apostle, he must allow us to allot him a higher place. Was Paul really less than the least of all saints? Was not this too low an estimate of himself? Brothers and Sisters, I suppose he meant that he felt this to be the case when he looked at himself from certain aspects. He was one of the late convertsmany of his comrades were in Christ before himand he yielded precedence to the older ones.

He had been, before, a persecutor and injurious and, though God had forgiven him, he had never forgiven himself. And when he remembered his share in the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints, he felt that though now numbered among them, he could only dare to sit in the lowest place. Besides, any devout man, however eminent he may be in most respects, will find that there are certain other points in which he falls short. And the Apostle, instead of looking at the points in which he excelled, singled out with modest eye those qualities in which he felt he failed. It is in these respects he put himself down as, less than the least of all saints.

This strikes us as being a very different mode of speech from that which is adopted by certain Brethren. One friend asserts that he has ceased from known sin for some months. Then another Brother, to go a little further, asserts that the very being of sin in him has been destroyed, root and branchof which I believe, in both cases, not one single word! If those Brothers had said that they were 16 feet high, that their eyes were solid diamonds and that their hair was Prussian blue, I should feel towards them very much as I do now. They simply do not know themselves and the best article of furniture they could have in their houses would be a mirror which would let them see their own reflection! If they had once had such a sight, I guarantee you they would sing another tune, pitched to a far lower key.

Many who now shine in the highest places of self-estimation will, one day, be glad enough to sit at the feet of the poorest of the saints, unless I am greatly mistakenfor everyone that exalts himself shall be abased. For my part I had sooner hear Paul say that he was less than the least of all the saints than I would hear the holiest Brother out of Heaven say that he had been living without sin. I could believe the one, but I could not believe the other. Paul was as holy as the holiest now upon earth, but among the humble he was the most humble. The Lord make us each so.

Our next remark is that Paul thought very much of his Brethren. These two things usually go togethera low opinion of ones self and a high estimate of others. He calls himself less than the leastnot of all the Apostles, though even that would have been a lowly judgmentbut less than the least of all saints. And yet there were some very imperfect saints among his acquaintance. His pastoral observation had discovered many weak, trembling, half-instructed and even backsliding Brothers and Sisters. Remember how he differed from Barnabas about John Mark and how he rebuked Peter to his face because he was to be blamed?

He was not insensible of the defects of the saints, for in some of his Epistles he gives us a very sad picture of the condition of some of the members of the Churches. Yes, and of some who were true saints he tells them that he could only write to them as to carnal, as to babes in Christ and that when they ought to have been teachers they needed, themselves, to be taught the very elements of the faith! And yet he says he was less than the least of them! He must have thought very highly of the least instructed and most imperfect of the Divine family. After all, dear Brothers and Sisters, though we hear much fault found with professing Christians and Church members, and hear it said that they are no better than men of the world, we dare not be among their detractors. If we cannot find saints in the Church of God, certainly we shall find them nowhere else.

They are faulty, no doubt, but still, they are the Lords elect and the people on whom His heart is set! They are the excellent of the earth and if we may but be numbered with them we shall be thankful even if our name should stand lowest and last on the list! We count the regenerate and the sanctified to be the true aristocracy, the real nobility of the world. O God You are my God, my goodness extends not to You, but to the saints that are in the earth and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. The Church, notwithstanding her spots, is fairest among women, and though her garments are sometimes stained, (would God they were not), yet, for all that, she is all glorious withinher clothing is of worked gold. She is beautiful in the eyes of her Lord! He loved her well enough to redeem her with His precious blood and to make her His bride!

It would be shameful on our part to despise her. She ought to be lovely in our eyes, yes, and she is, for we love the people of God beyond all others. My inmost soul can say of the Church of God

*My soul shall pray for Zion still   
While life or breath remains.   
There my best friends, my kindred dwell   
There God my Savior reigns.*

The next reflection suggested by the text is that Paul thought very highly of his work. He says, Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach. He looked upon his ministry as a great gift from God, an honor bestowed, a favor granted. Yet, my Brethren, Pauls office was not such a very attractive thing, after all, looking upon it after the manner of men. Paul was not a Lord Bishop or a Right Reverend. His salary was less than nothing. He received no homage from men. His greatest gains were his losses. His honors came from his dishonors and his glory from his sufferings!

Stripes and imprisonments awaited him in every city. Stoning and shipwreck, perils of robbers and perils of traitors, care and grief were his portion. He was made an outcast for Christs sake. His Jewish brethren even foamed at the mouth at the very thought of the renegade Pharisee who preached to the Gentiles! He had suffered the loss of all things for

Christs sake and he says he, counted them but dung that he might win Christ and be found in Him. If the vacancy and next presentation of Pauls office had been put up at Garraways, our modern imitators of Simon Magus would have been very slow in the biddingthey would rather have paid a heavy fee to be excused! Paul, himself, said of it, If in this life, only, we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.

Yet so content was he to preach the Gospel that, notwithstanding all the hardships and reproaches which went with it, he considered it to be a special favor granted him of the Lord that he was permitted to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles! The Apostle even lifts up his hands in grateful astonishment that so great an honor should be bestowed upon him. He says Unto meunto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that Ithe persecutor, the man who breathed out threats and slaughterthat I should preach among the Gentiles. He marvels at it! He cannot understand it!

The passage reads as if he paused in his writing and burst into a song of adoring gratitude because the Lord had honored him so exceedingly as to put him in trust with the Gospel! How deeply do I sympathize with him in his wonder at electing love! My heart cries, Why me, Lord, why me? Note well that the Apostle had a very clear view of what he had to do. That I should preach, he says, among the Gentiles. Paul does not claim to be sent to regenerate the Gentiles by sprinkling them, or to hear their confessions of secret sin, or to pry into their private lives with filthy questions and to absolve them on the fulfillment of appointed penanceshe has not a word to say about playing the priest!

He does not glory in the Grace which enabled him to display a comely ritual, or restore a pompous ceremonialism. He boasts not of carrying a crucifix or a banner in a procession up and down the aisles to delight the Gentiles. Nor, in a word, does he set himself up as a sort of demi-god, able to kill and to make alive, to distribute pardons and to regenerate babes. Paul was quite satisfied to preach the Gospelthat was as far as his commission wentand whenever God, the Holy Spirit, sends forth a minister to bless the Church, that is the purpose of his mission and nothing elsehe is to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!

Neither our Lord nor His Apostles command us to set up altarsthe grand command is preach the Gospel to every creature. O you priests of the Church of England, take off your tag-rags and stand out like men and preach the Gospel, if, indeed, you are ministers of God and not sappers and miners for the pope of Rome! God sends men to preach the Gospel He never sends them to intrude into the office of Christ and set themselves up as priests offering sacrifices for the quick and deadwhen in Him the priesthood is fulfilled! Paul knew what his vocation was and he kept to it. Find me one instance of his acting the priest! Wherever he went, he was preaching and teachingpreaching and teaching, preaching and teachingthat was the one object of his life.

Whether in Damascus or Corinth, Jerusalem or Rome, he must preach! When he was amid the Areopagites on Mars Hill, why did he not show them the beauty of Divine service as performed in the most approved fashion? Why at Lystra did he not offer a sacrifice to God and wave a censer?all the materials were ready! No. He preached everywhere! When detained at Rome he did not train a choir, or instruct a company of clergy in ecclesiastical calisthenics, or Church millineryhe taught Jesus to all around. We read nothing of his genuflections and intonationsbut a great deal of his preaching the Word in season and out of season!

This, too, is our work. The Church must see to it that this ordinance is used above every other for the conversion of men. It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe! Stand to your guns, my Brotherspreach the Word of Godmake full proof of your ministry and cease not to teach all men the Truth of God concerning Jesus. Remark how Paul calls his ministry a Grace. Every true preacher of the Gospel will have to thank God that he has been permitted to preach. I do not know how my soul would have been kept alive if it had not been for the searching of Scripture, the prayer, the faith and the joy which preaching has involved!

Though it may be true that professional familiarity with sacred things is apt to breed a lack of personal enjoyment in men, I do not find it so. To me it is a great blessing to have to prepare for preaching. Often the best means of Grace to my own soul are the groans, the pleading, the meditation and the communion needed for the selection of the right subject upon which to feed your souls. Preachers have to grow in Grace, for their very calling places them at a great advantage, since they are bound to search the Scriptures and to be much in prayer. It is a choice mercy to be permitted to preach the Gospel! I wish some of you would be desirous of it, for earnest preachers are needed. There are several Brothers here who ought to preachand I believe they

would preach with great power if they were once driven to the attempt. A modesty which may be cowardice silences many. A diffidence, which may also be culpable love of ease, keeps them back from speaking in the name of the Lord. Brothers, let it be so no longer!

Thus, you see, Paul thought little of himself, much of his Brethren, and highly of his work. Again, Paul thought very lovingly of his congregation. He counted it a great Grace that he was permitted to preach among the Gentiles. Peter had a much more respectable sphere, for he was the Apostle of the Circumcision and preached to the ancient aristocratic race of the Hebrews. But Paul was sent to preach to the Gentile dogs who were despised by the Jews as uncircumcised and unclean. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, gave the Gentiles a sad character, for when speaking of worldly things He said, After all these things do the Gentiles seek, as if they were utterly gross and carnal and entirely besotted with groveling pursuits.

Paul, however, rejoiced to preach to these worldly-minded Gentiles. He was glad to bring the outcasts to Jesus! They were such an ignorant crew, these Gentiles, ignorant of the true God and eternal life. Though there were some of them wise in their own conceits, yet were they sunk in spiritual ignorance. There were the Greeks, proud of their learned folly. The Romans, boasting of brute force and despising a merely spiritual kingdom. The Scythians, barbarous and uncouth. And the bondsmen, sunk in vice and degradation. But he who was sent to labor among them

preferred them to any other audience! Paul thanked God for his congregation, ignorant as they were.

Worse than ignorant, they were worshippers of idolsthey had many gods and lordsand they bowed themselves before the personifications of their own wickedness. Yet Paul was glad to preach to idolaters! The first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans contains a fearful indictment against the Gentiles for their horrible vices. They were sunk in a horrible slough of corruption and yet Paul considered it a great privilege to preach among these ignorant, debased, vicious heathen Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ! And a privilege it was! It is a royal honor to preach to the lowest of the low.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, wherever you and I are called to labor we ought to be thankful that God has given us that particular place to labor in. I like to see Christian workers fall in love with their spheres. For instance, the Brethren who work in Golden Lane and Seven Dials do well to look upon their districts as the most important in London. And every city missionary, if he is to succeed, must feel that his particular part of the city is that which is best for him. I like to hear Mr. Moffat speak as if there were no people in the world of more consequence than Bechuanas and Hottentots. I never knew a man to succeed among a people unless he preferred them to all others as the objects of his care. When ministers despise their congregations, their congregations are very likely to despise themand then usefulness is out of the question.

When a man thinks himself above his work, the probability is that he is altogether in the clouds, or stands in the way of some practical worker of a more commonplace kind who would do the work which he is despising. Oh you who teach little children, love them or you cannot teach them! If you preach in the street, feel a sympathy with the people who gather around you, or you had better give it up. Paul became a Gentile for the Gentiles sake. Pharisee as he had been, we see nothing of his phylacteries or the broad borders of his garment. He always loved his kinsmen, according to the flesh, and would have gladly died to save them. Jew as he was and at one time bound by the strongest possible Jewish prejudices, he had broken them all down and had made the Gentiles his clients, his flock, his children! It was his daily joy that he was ordained to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!

Upon our next remark we will more fully enlarge. It is this Paul thought most of all, of his Subject. That he had to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ was his highest bliss. The glories of Jesus, whom once he had persecuted, were his one and only theme. All he had to say was contained within the circumference of that word, Christ, and all that he aimed at was to glorify his Lord. Neither ceremonies, nor orthodoxies, nor philosophies, nor sects, nor parties did Paul labor forhe exalted only in Christ Jesus the Lord! Nor did he feel that his engrossment by one solitary Subject restricted him in his thought or speech, for he looked upon his theme as full of riches, riches altogether unsearchable! He had a deep insight into the Truth which he had to proclaim and saw within it veins of precious thought which he could never exhaustlodes of more than golden treasure which no research could ever fully explore!

O to be in this fashion enamored of the Gospel, absorbed in it and wholly carried away by its charms! Let us meditate a few minutes upon the unsearchable riches of Christ, which it has been our joy to preach, even as it was Pauls. Notice, first, that the Apostle dwelt much upon the essential riches of Christs Person. Beloved, there are unsearchable riches in Christ, for He is, by Nature, God over all, blessed forever. Others may make Him a mere man, but we behold the unsearchable riches of the Deity in Jesus Christ, In whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made!

He is the Preserver of all things and by Him all things consist. What riches there must be in Him who both makes and sustains the universe by the Word of His power! In Jesus Christ all the attributes of God are manifestthe Wisdom, the Power, the Immutability, the Truth, the Faithfulness, the Justice and Love of God are all to be found in the Character of Jesus Christ our Lord! Even while He was here on earth and clothed Himself in mortal flesh, the Godhead shone through the veil! The winds knew Him and were silent. The waves knew Him and kissed His feet. The angels ministered to Him and the devils fled before Him. Diseases were healed, for His touch was Omnipotent. The dead lived, for His voice was almighty. He was God, even while to mortal eye He was only the carpenters son.

Today He has put off His servants garments and laid aside the towel which with He wiped His disciples feetand all power is given unto Him in Heaven and on the earth! Let us, then, proclaim His unsearchable riches. Now is He crowned with universal Sovereignty and the government is upon His shoulders! His name is called, Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Riches beyond compare belong to Him who, for our sakes, became poor, though He has riches unsearchable, for He is God, and, Who, by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? Jesus is very God of very God and as such we adore Him, and glory in the wealth of His Nature.

Jesus, our Lord, is also ManMan of the substance of His mother bone of our bone. And here we may sing of the wealth of human love which is treasured up in Him and manifested to His Brethren. His wealth of sympathy with His people, for He has been tempted in all points like as they are. His wealth of discernment, for He knows the secrets of our nature, having worn that nature, Himself. Because of the riches of His love He is not ashamed to call His redeemed ones Brethren. It is a wonderful subject, the wealth of pure Manhood which dwelt in Jesus, for He both thought and spoke and acted as manwith a richness of perfect Manhood which never dwelt in any other son of man! He was the true Adamthe sum of humanitys best Glory, made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovahs hands. Thus, in the two Natures which make up His mysterious Person, Son of man and Son of God, there was a measureless wealthand this Paul preached.

My Brethren, I boldly ask you whether during these 20 years I have not tried to set forth the unsearchable riches of my Lord and Master in His blessed Person? I have preached Him to you as no mere abstraction, but as a real Christ. I have not talked of Him as if He were a myth. I have spoken of Him always as an actual Person who lived and died, and is risen and gone into Heaven. I have also preached Him as still among you in Spirit, Head of the Church and Lord over all. Neither have I preached to you a Christ stinted in power or Glory. I have endeavored, according to my ability, to set Him forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Your hearts have rejoiced to hear of Him and mine has rejoiced to speak of One so altogether lovely, so good, so kind, so ready to forgive, so faithful and mighty! In a word, I have preached the unsearchable riches of His Person.

Next, we have to preach the riches of our Lord Jesus as the Christ. That is to say, in His relationship towards us. Now, think a minute or two. In the old eternity, before ever the earth was, the unsearchable riches of Christ were displayed when He entered into Covenant with the Father on our behalf. What matchless love it was which prompted the Second Person of the Divine Unity to become the Surety of the Covenant of Grace for His elect! Unsearchable were the riches of Love which suggested the Covenant and the riches of the Wisdom which planned it. It was worthy of a God!

Remember, that as time rolled on, His people, as they were one by one created, were saved simply on the ground of His word and pledge. And if the bare bond of Christ, before He had shed a drop of His blood, was able to save myriads of His elect, what riches there must be in His Atonement, itself! If His promise to redeem was enough for thousands of years to save multitudes from death and Hell, what must be the riches of the finished Righteousness and the accomplished Substitution?

Think of the riches of Christs Grace from the day of mans Fall until the day of his redemption. He saw man in his waywardness and knew what he would be under the

best conditions, yet He did not turn aside from His pledge of love because of the baseness of fallen humanity. He knew that men would prove ungrateful, yet He resolved to redeem His people. He had, throughout those ages, an opportunity of estimating what the pangs of death would be. He knew the cost at which He must seek and save the lostbut through those thousands of years such were the riches of His infinite Love that He never started back from the compact which He had madebut determined to push on till, by His death He had delivered man from sin and the earth from the curse!

Wealth of mercy! What can transcend this? Down the Lord descends to Bethlehems manger and there He lies, a Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes! Who shall tell the riches of the condescending love which made the Infinite, Incarnate? Among the sons of men He tarries, going about doing good! Calculate, if you can, the riches of that generous heart which detained Him for years among a sinful and gainsaying generation! The life of Jesus on earth is a mint of Grace! But oh, the unsearchable Love which led Him to give His hands to the nails and His heart to the spear! What unspeakable love is centered in the Cross! What riches of Divine Grace that He should deign to die a malefactors death for His enemies!

Can any of us conceive the unsearchable riches of merit which must lie in the holy life and painful death of our beloved Lord? If the Son of God, Himself, deigns to die, the Just for the unjust, surely no limit can be set to the virtue of that death! Neither, indeed, can we calculate how precious it must be in the Fathers sight. O You bleeding Savior, when You had become poorest of all in Your own Glory, surely You did also become richest of all for the redemption of the sons of men! None shall ever know, nor even eternity, itself, fully declare the infinite value of Your tears and bloody sweat, and agony and death! But look, He rises again, for the tomb could not contain HimHe rises for our Justification! In the risen Savior what wealth may be seen, for while He justifies all His people by His rising, He also secures eternal life for them and guarantees to their bodies a glorious resurrection! Think of our Lord as the first fruits of them that sleep and you will see in His Resurrection a Truth of God which is the cornerstone of the entire Gospeland the sure pledge of eternal bliss.

But lo, He spurns the hill of Olivet and mounts into the opened heavensa cloud receiving Him from mortal sight! As He ascends, He scatters gifts among the sons of men. The Holy Spirit is givenHe rests in tongues of fire upon the heads of chosen men. He gave some Apostles, some pastors and teachers for the building up of His Church. Those gifts He still continues to bestow, for He received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. The riches of the ascended Saviorit is not possible for the mind to calculate! Look again! Behold Him in Heaven! There He sits at the right hand of the Father to represent His people! Is there not a wealth of comfort in that representation? He sits on the Throne to rule for His peoplethere is another mine of consolation! His Presence is the guarantee of our being thereis not this full of richness?

He intercedes for all His saints before the Eternal Thronethere is another treasure house of marvelous instruction and delight! Jesus sits forever at the right hand of God, because His work is done. He waits until His enemies become His footstoolis He not to us a treasure of unsearchable riches? But He is soon to come and who shall tell the riches which then shall be revealedwhen sin shall fly before Him and this burdened earth shall be eased of the load which has made her continually groan? When, instead of thorn and thistle, shall come up the cedar and the rose! When the desert shall rejoice and blossom and men down-trod and weary, shall lift up their eyes to behold a new Paradise and enjoy a Glory such as eye has not seen nor ear hearda splendor of millennial bliss of which may every one of us be partakers! All this shall be because He comes!

There are unsearchable riches in Christ, whether living, dying, rising, dwelling in Heaven, or descending a second time to earth. See what a subject Paul had to preach! And we have preached it, too. These 20 years our one theme has been Christ Jesus in His relationship to His people, in His everlasting love, in His once-offered, completely atoning Sacrifice, in His pleading before the Fathers Throne and in the kingdom which is yet to subdue all things to itself. What a joy it is to have been privileged to preach all this!   
Thirdly and briefly, Paul had preached the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ in and to His people. He had told them that Christ had paid their debts and they were free. How wondrously had he put itThere is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. We cannot stop to repeat the texts, but Paul had been clear enough upon the pointthat the riches of Christ in pardoning sin were unsearchable. He had told the saints that Christ had provided all that could be needed by them between where they were and the gates of Heaven, for, he said, you are complete in Him. All things are yours, whether things present or things to come.

Paul had delighted to dive into the depth of overflowing Grace. What a grand swimmer he was in the sea of Joy! He had also told the saints that they might have whatever they asked for in answer to believing prayer. How often had he put it before them that He who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for them, would also, with Him, freely give them all things? What riches of Christ are found at the Mercy Seat! He who knows how to draw near to God by Jesus Christ will find great stores of wealth there. He had assured them that the Lord, Himself, was theirs, yes, he said, all things are yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods.

He had told them that Heaven was theirs, for they had obtained an inheritance in Christ and were on their way to Glory, every hour bringing them nearer. Truly, if you want to know the deep things of God, you must listen to Paul, for he tells us of the eternity of Christs Love, a Love without beginning and without end! He tells us of the Immutability of that Love, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He tells us of the Infinity of that Love, and delights to declare that it passes knowledge. In fact, he tells us that God, Himself, is ours, to be our portion forever. Oh, children of God, if you are limited, you are not limited in the preaching of the Apostleyou are limited in yourselves! I venture, also, to say that in my own preaching I have not knowingly held back any of the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, nor spoken lightly of the blessings which Jesus gives to His beloved. No, I have delighted to speak upon what the Lord has given to His saints and have bid Believers enjoy the fat things full of marrow which He has provided for them. Happy people to have such a Savior!

But lastly, the point Paul most rejoiced to preach upon was this the unsearchable riches of our Lord towards sinners, for he says that he preached among the Gentilesthe sinnersthe unsearchable riches of Christ. This is the most delightful theme of allto tell poor sinners that there is an unspeakably rich Savior! I lament to say that there are preachers who do not preach this among the Gentiles. They have a great deal to say to Gods own people, but they have nothing to say to the Gentiles, to the sinnersto the insensible, unquickened sinnersnothing to say to them. I have known them close a sermon by saying, The election has obtained it, the rest are blinded, and sit down with not a word for those dead in sin.

Brothers and Sisters, we have not so learned Christ! We delight to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery. What have we to say to Gentile sinners? Why, we have to tell them that our Lord Jesus is so rich in Divine Grace that He keeps open house all day and all night longand, Come and welcome, is written over His palace gates! Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. We have to tell you that, though millions of sinners have already come, the banquet table is as loaded as it ever was! He has as much Grace and Mercy to distribute as He had 1,800 years ago! He is as able to cleanse from sin, as able to justify and to sanctify as He was when first He began His work of mercy! There is no limit to His Grace for those that come to Him! Whoever comes to Him shall receive eternal salvation!

My Master is so rich that He needs nothing from any of you. You need not bring a rag with youHe will cover you from head to foot. You need not bring a moldy crustHe will give you of the Bread of Heaven! You need not stop to cleanse away a single spotHe will wash you white as snow. Help from you? Does the sun need help from darkness? Christ needs no help from sinners! Let them come empty-handed, naked, sick, helpless and believe that He is able to do for them all that they require.

I am bold to tell you that my Masters riches of Divine Grace are so unsearchable that He delights to forgive and forget enormous sin! The bigger the sin the more Glory to His Grace! If you are over head and ears in debt, He is rich enough to discharge your liabilities. If you are at the very gates of Hell, He is able to pluck you from the jaws of destruction. So mighty is His Mercy that no case did ever exceed His power to save or ever will! I will challenge you to a contest with regard to my dear Lord and Master, that if you will sit down and think the best and largest thoughts you can of Him, you will not think Him to be so good and loving as He really is! If you will try and wish for the largest blessings you can conceive, you shall not be able to wish for such blessings as He is prepared to bestow! And if you will open your mouth wide and make a request for the greatest favor that ever a human being asked of God or man, you shall not ask for a tenth of what He is prepared to give!

Come and try Him! Let it be a wrestling match between your needs and Christs abundanceand see which will win the day! I tell you that, as Aarons rod swallowed up the rods of the magicians, so my Masters AllSufficiency will swallow up all the demands of your dreadful necessities! Only come and try Him now! All that you need between the gates of Hell and the gates of Heaven you shall find in Christand you shall have it all for nothingall just for the asking. Open your hands and take it, it is all He asks of youthat you believingly receive what He freely bestows! Trust in Him, in Him as dead and risen, and ascended, and reigning! Rely upon Him, and by so doing you shall find that there are unsearchable riches of Grace in Him.

Now, I have done when I have said just this. I have no doubt Paul would not have been so pleased to preach Christ as he was unless something had come of it. Now, at the close of 20 years of printed sermons, my great delight in having preached the unsearchable riches of Christ lies in thisthat something, by the Grace of God, has come of it! How many souls have been converted is not in my power to tell. I do not think I ever pass a single day, nor have done so for some years, without having intimations of some persons at the very ends of the earth, or at home, having been led to the Savior by the reading of the sermons.

I am not prepared to say how many persons have gone through this Church to other Churches or to Heaven. The number can hardly be far short of those which remain, and of these it may suffice to say that 4,700 souls are with us, still kept by the power of Grace, and knit together in Church fellowship. Is not this matter of great thankfulness to God? During these 20 years the dew has never ceased to fall! The Church has been planted like a tree by rivers of watershe has brought forth her fruit in her seasonand whatever she has attempted has prospered. I joy, therefore, and will joy in this.

Yet, once more, I think Paul must have felt a special gladness that through his preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, others had been raised up to preach it, too. So has it been with us, by God's Grace. How many tongues this day are preaching Christ out of our Church members and students, I cannot assert definitely, but that they are to be counted by hundreds is certain. Would to God they were 10 times as many! I wish all the rest of this congregation who love Christ would go and talk about Him, too. Some among you are very diligent and I bless God for you. I wish more of you were trying to bring these unsearchable riches of Christ within the knowledge of the ignorant and sinful.

It is the last Sabbath of the year. Could we not begin, next year, with a great deal more industry than we have strewn this year? I am afraid there are many members who have no work to do for Jesus and these are the sort of people to backslide. You that have neither to do nor to suffer are the baggage of the army, the impediments which prevent the host from marching on to victory! Bestir yourselves! Feed upon Jesus and then take the good cheer to those who do not know the riches of Christ. And as God gives you Grace, go and fulfill this ministry and you will then say, as I do, and as the Apostle said of old, Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Lord bless you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 3.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK1,035, 1,041, 960. END OF VOLUME 20   
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THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

NO. 745

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 14, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE AGRICULTURAL HALL, ISLINGTON.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.   
Ephesians 3:8.

THE Apostle Paul felt it to be a great privilege to be allowed to preach the Gospel. He did not look upon his calling as a drudgery or a servitude, but he entered upon it with intense delight. All Gods truly-sent servants have experienced much delight in the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus, and it is natural that they should, for their message is one of mercy and love. If a herald were sent to a besieged city with the tidings that no terms of mercy would be offered, but that every rebel without exception should be put to death, I think he would go with lingering footsteps, stopping by the way to let out his heavy heart in sobs and groans.

But if he were commissioned to go to the gates with the white flag to proclaim a free pardon, a general act of amnesty and oblivion, surely he would run as though he had wings on his heels. With a joyful alacrity he would tell his fellow citizens the good pleasure of their merciful king! Heralds of salvation, you carry the most joyful of all messages to the sons of men! When the angels were commissioned for once to become preachers of the Gospel, and it was but for once, they made the sky ring at midnight with their choral songs, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

They did not moan out a dolorous dirge as of those proclaiming death, but the glad tidings of great joy were set to music and announced with holy mirth and celestial song. Peace on earth! Glory to God in the highest is the joyous note of the Gospeland in such a key should it ever be proclaimed! We find the most eminent of Gods servants frequently magnifying their office as preachers of the Gospel. Whitfield was accustomed to call his pulpit his throneand when he stood upon some rising knoll to preach to the thousands gathered in the open airhe was more happy than if he had assumed the imperial purple, for he ruled the hearts of men more gloriously than does a king!

Carey was laboring in India and his son Felix had accepted the office of ambassador to the king of BurmahCarey said, Felix has driveled into an ambassadoras though he looked upon the highest earthly office as an utter degradation if for it the minister of the Gospel forsook his lofty vocation. Paul blesses God that this great Grace was given to him, that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ! He looked upon it not as toil, but as a Divine Grace.

Aspire to this office, young men whose souls are full of love to Jesus! Fired with sacred enthusiasm, covet earnestly the best gifts, and out of love to Jesus try whether you cannot in your measure tell to your fellow men the story of the Cross. Men of zeal and ability, if you love Jesus, make the ministry your aim! Train your minds to it! Exercise your souls towards it, and may God the Holy Spirit call you to it, that you also may preach the Word of reconciliation to the dying thousands. The laborers still are fewmay the Lord of the harvest thrust you into His work.

But while Paul was thus thankful for his office, his success in it greatly humbled him. The fuller a vessel becomes the deeper it sinks in the water. A plenitude of Grace is a cure for pride. Those who are empty, and those especially who have little or nothing to do, may indulge a fond conceit of their abilities because they are untried. But those who are called to the stern work of ministering among the sons of men will often mourn their weakness, and in the sense of that weakness and unworthiness they will go before God and confess that they are less than the least of all saints.

I prescribe to any of you who seek humility, try hard work! If you world know your nothingness, attempt some great thing for Jesus. If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ! You will come back from the proclamation thankful that you were permitted to attempt it, but crying, Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm the Lord revealed? And you will know, as you never knew before, what a weak unworthy thing you are!

Although our Apostle thus knew and confessed his weakness, there is one thing which never troubled himhe was never perplexed as to the subject of his ministry. I do not find the Apostle in all his writings proposing to himself the question, What shall I preach? No, my Friends, he had been taught in the college of Christ, and had thoroughly learned his one Subject, so that preferring it beyond all else, he said, with solemn decision, I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. From his first sermon to his last, when he laid down his neck upon the block to seal his testimony with his blood, Paul preached Christ, and nothing but Christ!

He lifted up the Cross, and extolled the Son of God who bled on it. His one and only calling here below was to cry, Behold the Lamb! Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. I pause, to ask, on my own account, the prayers of Gods people yet again, that the Holy Spirit may be my Helper this morning. O deny not my earnest request! I call the attention of you all to this great master subject which engrossed all the powers and passions of such a one as Paul. And I shall beg you to notice first, a glorious Person mentionedthe Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, unsearchable riches spoken of. And thirdly, which shall make our practical conclusiona royal intention impliedthe intention which Jesus had in His heart when He bade His servants preach His unsearchable riches.

I. First then, may the Spirit of God strengthen us in our weakness while we try to speak upon THIS GLORIOUS PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ was the first promise of God to the sons of men after the Fall. When our first parents had been banished from the Garden all was dark before them. There was not a star to gild the cheerless midnight of their guilty and despairing souls until their God appeared to them, and said in mercy, The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpents head.

That was the first star which God set in the sky of mans hope. Years rolled after years and the faithful looked up to it with comfort. That one promise stayed the soul of many a faithful one so that he died in hope, not having received the promise, but having seen it afar off, and having rejoiced in its beams. Whole centuries rolled away, but the Seed of the woman did not come. Messiah, the great bruiser of the serpents head, did not appear. Why did He tarry? The world was foul with sin and full of woe! Where was the Shiloh who should bring it peace? Graves were dug by millions. Hell was filled with lost spirits, but where was the Promised One, mighty to save?

He was waiting till the fullness of time should come. He had not forgotten, for He had Gods will in His inmost heart. His desire to save souls was consuming His heart. He was but waiting until the word should be given. And when it was given, lo, He came delighting to do the Fathers will! Do you seek him? Behold, in Bethlehems manger Emmanuel is born, God is with us! Before your eyes He lies who was both the Son of Mary, and the Son of the Blessed! An Infant, and yet Infinite, of a span long, and yet filling all eternity, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and yet too great for space to hold Him!

Thirty and more years He lived on earth. The latter part of His life was spent in a ministry full of suffering to Himself, but filled with good to others. We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth. Never man spoke like that Man, He was a Man on fire with love. A Man without human imperfections, but with all human sympathies. A Man without the sins of manhood, but with something more than the sorrows of common manhood piled upon Him. There was never such a Man as He, so great, so glorious in His life, and yet He is the pattern and type of manhood. He reached His greatest when He stooped the lowest. He was seized by His enemies one night when wrestling in prayer. He was betrayed by the man who had eaten bread with Him. He was dragged before tribunal after tribunal through that long and sorrowful night and wrongfully accused of blasphemy and sedition.

They scourged Him, though none of His works deserved a blow! But still the plowers made deep furrows on His back. They mocked Him. Though He merited the homage of all intelligent beings, yet they spat in His face, and smote Him with their mailed fists, and said, Prophesy, who is he that smote You? He was made lower than a slave. Even the abject opened their mouths with laughter at Him, and the slaves scoffed at Him. To end the scene, they took Him through the streets of the Jerusalem over which He had weptthey hounded Him along the Via Dolorosa, out through the gate, to the mount of doom.

I think I see Him, with eyes all red with weeping He turns to the matrons of Salem, and cries, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves, and for your children. Can you see Him bearing that heavy Cross, ready to faint beneath the burden? Can you endure to see Him, when, having reached the little mound outside the city, they hurl Him on His back, and drive the cruel iron through His hands and feet? Can you bear to see the spectacle of blood and anguish as they lift Him up between Heaven and earth, made a Sacrifice for the sin of His people?

My words shall be few, for the vision is too sad for language to depict. He bleeds, He thirsts, He groans, He criesat last He diesa death whose unknown griefs are not to be imagined, and were they known would be beyond expression by human tongue.

Now, it was the history of the Crucifixion which Paul delighted to preachChrist crucified was his themethis old, old story, which you have heard from your childhood, the story of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. You all know that our Lord, after He had been taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb, lingered there but a few short hours. And then on the third day rose again from the dead, the same, yet not the samea Man, but no more despised and rejected. He communed with His servants in a familiar and yet glorious manner for forty days, and cheered and comforted their hearts. And then, from the top of Olivet, in the sight of the company, He ascended to His Fathers Throne.

Follow Him with your hearts if you cannot with your eyes. Behold Him as the angels meet Him, and   
*Bring His chariot from on high,   
To bear Him to His Throne.   
Clap their triumphant hands, and cry,   
The glorious work is done.*

There He sitsfaith sees Him this very dayat the right hand of God, even the Father, pleading with authority for His people. He rules Heaven, and earth, and Hell, for the keys thereof swing at His waistwaiting till, on the flying cloud, He shall descend to judge the quick and dead, and distribute the vengeance or the reward. It was this glorious Person of whom Paul delighted to speak!

He preached the doctrines of the Gospel, but he did not preach them apart from the Person of Christ. Do not many preachers make a great mistake by preaching doctrine instead of preaching the Savior? Certainly the doctrines are to be preached, but they ought to be looked upon as the robes and vestments of the Man Christ Jesus, and not as complete in themselves. I love justification by faithI hope I shall never have a doubt about that grand Truth of God! But the cleansing efficacy of the precious blood appears to me to be the best way of putting it. I delight in sanctification by the Spiritbut to be conformed to the image of Jesus is a still sweeter and more forcible way of viewing it.

The doctrines of the Gospel are a golden throne upon which Jesus sits as kingnot a hard, cold stone rolled at the door of the sepulcher in which Christ is hidden. Brethren, I believe this to be the mark of Gods true minister that he preaches Christ as his one choice and delightful theme. In the old romance they tell us that at the gate of a certain noble hall there hung a horn, and none could blow that horn but the true heir to the castle and its wide domains. Many tried it. They could make sweet music on other instruments. They could wake the echoes by other bugles. But that horn was mute, let them blow as they might. At last, the true heir came, and when he set his lips to the horn, shrill was the sound and indisputable his claim.

The true minister is he who can preach Christ. Let him preach anything else in the world, he has not proved his calling, but if he shall preach Jesus and the resurrection, he is in the Apostolic succession! If Christ crucified is the great delight of his soul, the very marrow of his teaching, the fatness of his ministryhe has proved his calling as an ambassador of Christ. Brethren, the Christian minister should be like these golden spring flowers which we are so glad to see. Have you observed them when the sun is shining? They open their golden cups and each one whispers to the great sun, Fill me with your beams! But when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, where are they? They close their cups and droop their heads.

So should the Christian feel the sweet influences of Jesusso especially should the Christian minister be subject to his Lord. Jesus must be his Sun and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness. Happy would it be for us if our hearts and our lips could become like Anacreons harp which was wedded to one subject and would learn no other. He wished to sing of the sons of Atreus, and the mighty deeds of Hercules, but his harp resounded love alone. And when he would have sung of Cadmus, his harp refusedit would sing of love alone. Oh, to speak of Christ aloneto be tied and bound to this one theme forever to speak alone of Jesus and of the amazing love of the glorious Son of God, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. This is the subject which is both seed for the sower, and bread for the eater. This is the live coal for the lips of the preacher, and the master key to the heart of the hearer. This is the tune for the minstrels of earth, and the song for the harpers of Heaven! Lord, teach it to us more and more, and we will tell it out to others!

Before I leave this subject I feel bound to make two or three remarks. You will perceive that the Apostle Paul preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the dignity of manhood, or the grandeur of human nature. He preached not man, but mans Redeemer. Let us do the same. Moreover, he did not preach up the clergy and the church, but Christ alone. Some of the gentlemen who claim to be in the Apostolic succession could hardly have the effrontery to claim to be the successors of Paul.

I believe that our modern priests of Rome are in the Apostolic successionI have never doubted that they are the lineal successors of Judas Iscariot who betrayed his Master! But no other Apostle would endure them for so much as an hour. If Paul had been their leader would he have preached the unsearchable riches of priestcraft as they do? Do not they preach up their own priestly power? Did Paul do this? Is not their one great theme the unsearchable riches of baptism? The unsearchable riches of the Eucharist, the blessed bread and the blessed wine? The unsearchable riches of their confession and absolution? The unsearchable riches of their albs, and their dalmatics, and their chasubles and I know not what else of the rags of the Whore of Babylon?

A fine day is this in which we are to go back to the superstitions of the Dark Agesso dark that our forefathers could not bear themand for the unsearchable cunning of priests are to give up the unsearchable riches of Christ! We are told that the Reformation was a mistakebut we tell these false priests to their faces that they are liars and know not the Truth of God! Beloved, Paul cared nothing for priestcraft! And this Book has not a word in it in favor of priestcraft. With Paul and with this Book all believers in Jesus are priests, and Gods only clergy.

Paul never posted bills upon the walls of Jerusalem, with black crosses on them, warning men that they would not be able to meet Christ at the Day of Judgment if they did not keep Good Friday! But I will tell you what Paul

didhe wrote to the Galatians, You observe days, months, and times, and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.

This whole abomination of ritualism was the utter abhorrence of the Apostle. In its first form of Judaism it stirred up his whole soul with indignation. It brought the blood into his cheek. He never was mightier in denouncing anything than when dealing heavy blows at ceremonialism! He said, Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love. Paul preached up no priest whether he lived at Rome or Canterbury! He exalted no class of men arrogantly pretending to have power to save. He would have been out of all patience with a set of simpletons decked out as Guys [effigy of Guy Fawkes paraded and burned on Guy Fawkes Day] and dressed up as if they were meant to amuse children in a nursery! He never taught the worship of these calvesJesus alone was his subject, and the unsearchable riches of His Grace.

Mark you, on the other hand, Paul did not preach up the unsearchable riches of philosophy, as some do. Yes, say some, We must please this thinking age, this thoughtful people. We must educate a people who will reject all testimony because they will not be credulouswho will believe nothing but what they can understand, because, indeed, their understanding is so amazingly clear, so perfect, so all but divine! Not so, the Apostle. He would have said to these philosophical gentlemen, Stand away. I have nothing at all that can make me kindred with you. I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the uncertainties of philosophical speculation! I give the people something to believe, something tangible to lay hold of, not superstitious, it is true, but Divinely accredited! Not concocted by the wisdom of man, but revealed by the wisdom of God.

My dear Friends, we must come back to the Gospel of Paul, and may God bring all His ministering servants more and more clearly back to it that we may have nothing to preach but that which clusters around the Cross! Nothing but that which glows and glistens like a sacred halo of light around the head of the Crucified Onethat we may lift up nothing but Jesus, and say, God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Secondly, Paul preached THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST. Paul had no stinted Savior to present to a few. No narrowhearted Christ to be the head of a clique. No weak Redeemer who could pardon only those little offenders who scarcely needed it. He preached a great Savior to the great masses! A great Savior to great sinners. He preached the Conqueror with dyed garments, traveling in the greatness of His strength, whose name is mighty to save.

Let us enquire in what respects we may ascribe to our Lord Jesus the possession of unsearchable riches. Our answer is, first, He has unsearchable riches of love to sinners as they are. Jesus so loved the souls of men that we can only use the so, but we cannot find the word to match it. In the French Revolution there was a young man condemned to the guillotine and shut up in one of the prisons. He was greatly loved by many, but there was one who loved him more than all put together.

How do we know this? It was his own father, and the love he bore his son was proved in this way: when the lists were called, the father, whose name was exactly the same as his sons, answered to the name and the father rode in the gloomy wagon out to the place of execution. And his head rolled beneath the axe instead of his sons, a victim to mighty love. See here an image of the love of Christ to sinnersfor thus Jesus died for the ungodly, viewed as such. If they had not been ungodly, neither they nor He had needed to have died. If they had not sinned, there would have been no need for a suffering Savior, but Jesus proved His boundless love in, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Your name was in the condemned list, my fellow Sinner, but, if you believe in Jesus, you shall find that your name is there no longer, for Christs name is put in your place, and you shall learn that He suffered for you, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God. Is not this the greatest wonder of Divine love, that it should be set upon us as sinners? I can understand Gods loving reformed sinners and repenting sinnersbut here is the glory of itGod commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners [yet sinners!] Christ died for us. O my Hearers, from my inmost heart I pray that this boundless wealth of love on the part of Jesus to those who were rebels and enemies may win your hearts to love the heavenly Lover in return!

In the next place, Jesus has riches of pardon for those who repent of their sins. My Lord Jesus, by His death, has become immensely rich in pardoning powerso rich, indeed, that no guiltiness can possibly transcend the efficacy of His precious blood. There is one sin which He never will forgivethere is but oneand I am convinced that you have not committed that sin against the Holy Spirit if you have any feeling of repentance or desire towards God. For the sin which is unto death brings death with it to the conscience, so that when once committed the man ceases to feel. If you desire pardon, Sinner, there is no reason why you should not have it, and have it now!

The blood of Christ can wash out blasphemy, adultery, fornication, lying, slander, perjury, theft, murder. Though you have raked in the very kennels of Hell till you have blackened yourself to the color of a devil, yet, if you will come to Christ and ask mercy, He will absolve you from all sin! Do but wash in the bath which He has filled with blood and though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Do not misunderstand me, I mean just thisthat the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not meant exclusively for you respectable people who always appear to be so religiousbut for you who are irreligious! For you who are not even moral, or sober, or honest!

I tell you the Gospel of Christ is meant for the scum of the population! It is meant for the lowest of the low, for the worst of the worst. There is no den in London where the Savior cannot work! There is no loathsome haunt of sin too foul for Him to cleanse. The heathen dreamed of their Hercules that he cleansed the Augean stables by turning a river through them, and so washing away the filth of ages. If your heart is such a stable, Christ is greater than the mightiest HerculesHe can cause the river of His cleansing blood to flow right through your heart, and your iniquities, though they are a heap of abominations, shall be put away forever! Riches of love to sinners as such, and riches of pardon to sinners who repent are stored up in the Lord Jesus.

Again, Christ has riches of comfort for all that mourn. Have I the happiness of having before me some who mourn before the Lord? Blessed are you, for you shall be filled! What is the cause of your weeping? Is it your sin? Christ has a handkerchief that can wipe away such tears. He can blot out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. Do but come to Him, and your deepest sorrow shall disappear beneath the influence of His sympathetic love. Are you sorrowful because you have lost a friend? He will be a Friend to you. Have you been deceived and betrayed? My Master can meet that craving of your nature after friendship and sympathy. Confide in Him, and He will never forsake you.

Oh, I cannot tell you how rich He is in consolation, but the Holy Spirit can tell you. If you do but get Jesus, you shall find, as Bernard used to say, that He is honey to the mouth, music to the ear, and Heaven to the heart. Win Christ, and you shall want nothing beyond Him. Lay hold of Him, and you shall say with the Apostle, I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content, for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

My Masters unsearchable riches are also of another kind. Do you thirst for knowledge? Jesus has riches of wisdom! The desire to know has sent men roving over all the world, but he who finds Jesus may stay at home and be wise. If you sit at His feet, you shall know what Plato could not teach you, and what Socrates never learned. When the old school men could not answer and defend a proposition, they were apt to say, I will go to Aristotle: he shall help me out. If you do but learn of Christ, He shall help you out of all difficultiesand that which is most useful for your soul to knowthe knowledge which will last you in eternity, Christ shall teach you!

Think not that the Gospel of Christ, because it is simple, is therefore mere childs play. Oh, no! It has that in it which an angels intellect unillumined of the Holy Spirit might fail to master. The highest ranks of seraphim, still lost in wonder, gaze upon it. Come to my Master and you shall be made wise unto salvation. Let me not weary you with so great a message. Perhaps I tell it badly, but the matter of it is worthy of your ears, and worthy of your hearts. My Master has riches of happiness to bestow upon you. After all, he is the rich man who wears hearts-ease in his button hole. The man who can say, I have enough, is richer than the peer of the realm who is discontented.

Believe me, my Lord can make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside still waters. There is no music like the music of His pipe when He is the Shepherd and you are the sheep, and you lie down at His feet. There is no love like Hisneither earth or Heaven can match it. If you did but know it, you would prize it beyond all mortal joys, and say with our poet

*Such as find You find such sweetness   
Deep, mysterious, and unknown.   
Far above all worldly pleasures,   
If they were to meet in one;   
My Beloved,   
Over the mountains haste away.*

I speak experimentally. I have had more joy in half-an-hours communion with Christ than I have found in months of other comforts. I have had much to make me happymany successes and smiles of Providence which have cheered and comforted my heart. But they are all froth on the cup, mere bubblesthe

foam of life, and not its true depths of bliss. To know Christ and to be found in Himoh, this is life! This is joy! This is marrow and fatness, wine on the lees well refined! My Master does not treat His servants churlishly. He gives to them as a king gives to a king. He gives them two Heavensa Heaven below in serving Him here, and a Heaven above in delighting in Him forever.

And now I shall close this poor talk of mine about these priceless riches by saying that the unsearchable riches of Christ will be best known in eternity. The riches of Christ are not so much to be enjoyed here as there. He will give you by the road and on the way to Heaven all your needs. Your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks, your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure. But it is there, there, THERE, where you shall hear the song of them that triumph, the shout of them that feast!

My dear Hearer, if you get Christ you have obtained riches which you can take with you in the hour of death. The rich man clutched his bags of money, and as he laid them on his heart, he murmured, They will not do, they will not do. Take them away! If you receive Jesus into your heart, He will be deaths best antidote. When your disembodied spirit quits this poor clay carcass, as it must, what will your silver and gold do for you then? What will your farms and your broad acres do for you then? You must leave them all behind. Even if men buy you a coffin of gold, or bury you in a tomb of marble, yet of what good will that be? But oh, if you have Christ, you can fly up to Heaven, your Treasure, and there you shall be rich to all the intents of bliss world without end!

Now, dear Friends, if I could have spoken as I would have spoken, I would have done so, but the subject would have been the same. Paul preached the Gospel better than I do, but even he could not preach a better Gospel. Let me close this point by a few words. My Master has such riches that you cannot count them! You cannot guess them, much less can you convey their fullness in words. They are unsearchable! You may look, and search, and weigh, but Christ is a greater Christ than you think Him to be when your thoughts are at their greatest. My Master is more able to pardon than you to sin! He is more able to forgive than you to transgress. My Master is more ready to supply than you are to ask, and ten thousand times more prepared to save than you are to be saved!

Never tolerate low thoughts of my Lord Jesus. Your highest estimates will dishonor Him. When you put the crown on His head, you will only crown Him with silver when He deserves gold. When you sing the best of your songs, you will only give Him poor, discordant music compared with what He deserves. But oh, do believe in Him, that He is a great Christ, a mighty Savior! Great Sinner, come and do Him honor by trusting in Him as a great Savior! Come with your great sins and your great cares, and your great needs! Come, and welcome! Come to Him now, and the Lord will accept you, and accept you without upbraiding you.

III. Lastly, there must have been A ROYAL INTENTION in the heart of Christ in sending out Paul to preach of His unsearchable riches because every man must have a motive for what he does. And beyond all question, Jesus Christ has a motive. Did you ever hear of a man who employed a number of persons to go about to proclaim his riches, and call hundreds of people together, and thousands, as on this occasion, simply to tell them that So-and-So was very rich? Why, the crowds would say, What is that to us?

But if at the conclusion, the messenger could say, But all these riches he presents to you, and whoever among you shall desire to be made rich, can be enriched now by him. Ah, then you would say, Now we see the sense of it! Now we perceive the gracious drift of it all. Now, my Lord Jesus Christ is very strong, but all that strength is pledged to help a poor weak sinner to enter into Heaven. My Lord Christ is a great king, and He reigns with irresistible powerbut all that Sovereign power He swears to give to Believers to help them to reign over their sins. My Lord Jesus is as full of merit as the sea is full of salt, but every atom of that merit He vows to give to sinners who will confess that they have no merits of their own, and will trust in Him!

Yes, and once more, my Lord Christ is so glorious that the very angels are not bright in His Presence, for He is the Sun, and they are but as twinkling stars. And all this glory He will give you, poor Sinner, and make you glorious in His glory if you will but trust Him! There is a motive, then, on our Lords part for bidding us preach a full Christ. I think I hear a whisper somewherethere is a poor heart standing crowded in the aisle, and it is saying to itself, Ah, I am full of sin. I am weak. I am lost. I have no merit. My dear Hearer, you do not need any merit, nor any strength, nor any goodness in yourself, for Jesus presents you with an abundance of all these in Himself!

I will not care whether I have money in my own purse or not, if I have a kind friend who says, All that I have is yours. If I may go and draw upon him whenever I please for whatever I wish, I will not desire to be independent of him, but I will live upon his fullness. Poor Sinner, you must do the same. You do not need merits or strength apart from Christ. Take my Master, and He will be enough for you while you shall joyfully sing, Christ is my All.

Two or three words, then. The first is thisHow rich those must be who have Christ for a Friend! Will you not seek to be friends with Him? If it is true that all Christ has He gives to His peopleand this is asserted over and over again in this Bookthen, oh, how unspeakably blessed must those be who can say, My Beloved is mine, and I am His! They who get Christ to be their own, properly are like the man who, having long eaten of fruit from a certain tree, was no longer satisfied with having the fruit, but he needed take up the tree and plant it in his own garden!

Happy those who have Christ planted as the Tree of Life in the soil of their hearts! You not only have His Grace, and His love, and His merit, but you have HIMSELF! He is all your own. Oh, that sweet word, Jesus is mine! Jesus is mine! All that there is in His Humanity, in His Deity, in His living and in His dyingin His reigning and in His second Adventall is mine, for Christ is mine!

How foolish, on the other hand, must those be who will not have Christ when He is to be had for the asking! Who prefer the baubles and the bubbles of this world, and let the solid gold of eternity go by! O Fools! You play with shadows and miss the substance! You dig and toil, and cover your faces with sweat, and lose your nightly rest to get this worlds fleeting good, while you neglect Him who is the eternal good! O Fools and slow of heart! You court this harlot world, with her painted face, when the beauties of my Master are infinitely more rich and rare! Oh, if you did but know Him! If you could but see His unspeakable riches you would fling your toys to the wind and follow after Him with all your heart and soul.

But may I have Him? asks one. May you, indeed? Who is to say no to you? Did not you hear the sweet notes of the hymn just now, Come and welcome. Come and welcome? When Heavens big bell rings, it always sounds forth that silver note for sinnersCome and welcome! Come and welcome! Leave your sins, leave your follies, leave your selfrighteousness! Jesus Christ stands at the open door of Divine Grace more willing to receive you than you are to be received by Him. Come and welcome, come and welcome. At the top of the Hospice of St. Bernard, in the storm, when the snow is falling fast, the monks ring the great bell and when the way cannot be seen, the traveler can almost hear the way to the house of refuge across the snowy waste.

So would I ring that bell this morning. Poor lost Traveler, with your sins and your fears blowing cold into your face, Come and welcome. Come and welcome, to a Savior once dead and buried for you, but now risen and pleading at the right hand of God! If you cannot see your way, yet hear it. Hear, and your soul shall live. And He will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. You need nothing but Christ, dear Heart. You need pump up no tears of repentance to help Christ, for He will give you repentance if you seek it of Him. You must come to Him to get repentance! You must not seek that Gospel blessing anywhere but at the Cross.

You will need no Baptisms and Lords Suppers to rely upon. It will be your duty as a Believer to profess your faith in Him and to remember Him at His table, but these things will not help your salvation. You will be saved by Jesus and by Him alone. You need experience no terrors. You need undergo no preparation. Christ is ready to receive you now. Like the surgeon whose door is open for every accident that may occur. Like the great hospitals on our side the river, where, let the case be what it may, the door swings open the moment an entrance is demandedsuch is my Master. Unsearchable riches are in Him, though unsearchable poverty may be in you

*Let not conscience make you linger,   
Nor of fitness fondly dream,   
All the fitness He requires,   
Is to feel your need of Him*

*This He gives you,   
Tis His Spirits rising beam.*

All this week long I have been fretting and worrying because I cannot preach to you as I wish. And when each of my sermons, here, has been over, I have wished that I could preach it again in a more earnest and fervent manner. But what can I do? O my Hearers, I can preach Christ to you, but I cannot preach you to Christ! I can tell you that if you trust Him you shall be saved. I can declare to you that as the Son of God now risen He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to Himbut I cannot make you come!

Yet, I thank God that since last Sunday I have heard of some who have come! I have heard good news of some who, by the Holy Spirits power, have believed in Jesus! Are there no more eyes that will look at my Masters wounds? Are there no more hearts that will fall in love with my Masters beauties? Must I come a wooing for Him, and get so small a return? Must it be ones and twos out of the 20,000 of you? God forbid it! God send us a greater rate of fruit than this! A hundred-fold harvest to a hundred-fold congregation! Pray, Believers, pray for a blessing! Pray that God may strike these lips dumb before next Sunday if He will do more good by some other preacher than by me!

Ask nothing for me, but ask large things for my Lord, for the Crucified One! Pray that these great gatherings may not be without a permanent result which shall tell upon the impiety of this city! Yes, and tell upon the piety of it, too, slaying the first, and stimulating the second! God send forth the Spirit of His Grace, and unto Him shall be the praise, world without end. Amen.

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ANOTHER AND A NOBLER EXHIBITION   
NO. 448

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 4, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. Ephesians 3:10.

ALL the world has been talking during the last three days of the splendid pageant which adorned the opening of the International Exhibition. Crowds have congregated in the palace of universal art. Representatives of all the nations of the earth have journeyed for many a league to view its wonders. Eminent personages of all empires have appeared in the gorgeous spectacle, and such a scene has glittered before the eyes of all men, as has never before in all respects been equaled and may not for many a year find a successor to rival it.

Why all these gatherings? Why muster you, all you nations? Why do you come here, you gazing sons of men? Surely your answer must be, that you have come together that you may see the manifold wisdom of MAN. As they walk along the aisles of the great Exhibition, what do they see but the skill of man? First in this department, and then in the other. At one moment in the magnificent, at the next in the minute. At one instant in a work of elegance in ornament, in the next in a work of skill and usefulnessmanifold wisdomthe works and productions of many minds. The different hues and colors of thought, embodied in the various machines and statues and so forth, which human skill has been able to produce.

We grant you that God has been most rightly recognized there, both in the solemn prayer of the Archbishop and in the hymn of the Laureate. But still the great object, after all, was to behold the manifold wisdom of man. And had they taken away mans skill and mans art, what would there have been left? Brethren, may the greatest results follow from this gathering! We must not expect that it, or anything else short of the Gospel, will ever bring about the universal reign of peace. We must never look to art and science to accomplish that triumph which is reserved for the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet may it spread the feelings of benevolencemay it bind together the scattered children of Adammay it fuse into a happy and blessed union the kindreds of men that were scattered abroad at Babel, and may it prepare the way and open the gates, that the Gospel may proceed to the uttermost ends of the earth. It is, however, very far from my mind to direct your attention to the marvels which crowd the area of the huge temple of 1862. I invite you, rather, to follow me to a nobler exhibition than this, where crowds are gatheringnot of mortals but of immortal spirits.

The temple is not of art and science but of Divine Grace and goodness, built with living stones, cemented with the fair colors of atoning blood, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. That temple, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Into this great palace crowd ten thousand times ten thousand of the host of God, cherubim and seraphim, or by whatever other names those bright intelligences may be known among themselvesprincipalities and powers.

The different degrees in the hierarchy of immortal spirits, if such there isthey are all represented as intently gazing upon the wondrous fabric which God has reared. Along the aisles of that Church, along the ages of its dispensations, stand the various trophies of Divine Grace and love the jewel cases of virtues and graces which adorn the Believerthe mementoes of triumphs gotten over sin and hardness of heart and of victories achieved over temptation and trial. And as the spirits walk along these corridors full of Divine workmanship, they stand, they gaze, they admire and wonder and speed back their way to Heaven and sing more loudly than before, hallelujahs to the God whose manifold wisdom they have beheld in the Church of God below.

Beloved Friends, our text is a strange one. If you will reflect that the angels, the elder-born of creatures when compared with us, have been with God for many an age. And yet I do not know that it is ever said that by anything else they ever learned the manifold wisdom of God. They were with Him when He made the earth and the heavensperhaps during those long periods when the earth was forming. In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the angels were likely to visit this world and to behold alive, and in their glory, those strange shapes of mystery which now we dig up in fossil from the earth.

Certainly in that day when the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face thereof, the angels knew the hidden treasure. And when He said, Let there be light and there was light, when that first ray of light seemed like a living finger to touch the earth and waken it to beauty, then seraphic fingers swept their heavenly harps and the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. Yet I do not learn, though they were with the Great Worker during the six days of creation, though they saw the cattle after their kind and the fowls of the air after their kind, and the fish of the sea and all the plants and herbs, yet I see not that in all this there was made known unto them the manifold wisdom of God.

No, morewhen man, the Masters last work, walked through Eden when, with his fair consort by his side, he stood up to praise his Maker, though he was fearfully and wonderfully made, though in his mind and body there was a display of wisdom unrivalled beforeyet I do not learn that even in man, as a creature, there was made known the manifold wisdom of God. Yes, and more than this, when other worlds were made, when the stars were kindled like glowing flames by light of Deity, if there were other peoples and other kindreds and other tribes in those myriads of far-off lands, I do not find in the creation of all those hosts of worlds which adorn the wide fields of ether, that there was then made known to celestial spirits the manifold wisdom of God.

No, more, in all the dispensations of Divine Providence apart from the Church, in all the mystic revolutions of those wondrous wheels that are full of eyes, apart from the Church, there has not been made known to these beings to the fullest extent the wisdom of God. Ah, and Brethren, remember yet once more, that they with undimmed eyes look upon the glory of Him that sits upon the Throne, so far as it can be seen by created vision. They behold the Beatific Vision. They are glistening in the splendors of Deity and veil their faces when at His footstool they cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.

And yet, though standing, as it were, in the sun, though they are foremost of all the creatures, nearest to the eternal Throne, I do not read that by all this they have in the highest sense learned the manifold wisdom of God. What an idea, then, does this give to us of the importance of the Church! Brethren, never let us despise any more the mean member of it, since there is more to be beheld in the Church than in creation in its utmost breadth. More of the wisdom of God in the saving of souls than in the building the arches of the sky. No, more of God to be seen than even Heaven with all its splendors can otherwise reveal.

Oh, let us open our eyes that we lose not those Divine mysteries which angels desire to look into! I have now already explained the meaning of the text. We have, therefore, but to direct your attention to those points of interest upon which angelic intelligence would be sure to linger. And we shall pray that, while we mention these in brief and running catalog, our hearts may be led to meditate much upon the manifold, the varied wisdom of God displayed in the Church which Christ has bought with His blood.

I. And first, dear Brethren, we think that the grand object of attention in the Church to the principalities and powers, is THE SCHEME AND PLAN OF SAVING THE CHURCH. It is this that they so much admire and wonder at. It has been exceedingly well said by others, that if a Parliament had been held of all the spirits in Heaven and in earth, and if it had been committed to this general assembly to ordain and fix upon a plan whereby God might be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, they must all have failed to achieve the task. Those lofty minds, doubtless, consider with delight the fact that in Gods way of saving His Church, all His attributes shine out with undiminished luster.

God is just. They know it in Heaven, for they saw Lucifer fall like lightning when God cast him out of his dwelling place on account of sin. God is just. And as much so upon Calvary, where his Son hangs and bleeds, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, as He was when He cast down the Son of the Morning. The angels see in salvation this great wonder of justice and peace embracing each otherGod as sternly just as if there were not a particle of mercy in His being, smiting His Son for the sin of His people with all the force of His mightGod, yet as merciful as if He were not justembracing His people as though they had never sinned and loving them with a love which could not have been greater had they never transgressed.

They understand how God so hated sin that He laid vengeance on His only Begotten and yet, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life. As in the crowns of Oriental princes the most precious jewels shone in clusters, so as in one wonderful

corona all the infinite attributes of God shine out at once in all their combined glory around Your Cross, O Jesus, earths wonder and Heavens prodigy! This difficulty, so delightfully met, so completely disposed of by the Atonement of Christ, causes the angels to behold the manifold wisdom of God.

But, furtherwhen the angels see that by this great plan all the ruin that sin brought upon mankind is removed, they again wonder at the wisdom of God. And when they especially notice the way in which it was removed, the strange and mysterious methods which God used for rolling away the stone from the door of the human sepulcher, they yet more bow down with awe. Did we lose Eden in Adam? Lo, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us a better than Paradise! Did we lose the dignity of manhood? Lo, today we regain it in Christfor You have put all things under His feet. Did we lose spotless purity? Again we have obtained it in Christ. For we are justified through His righteousness and washed in His blood.

Did we lose communion with God? We have obtained it this day. For we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. Did we lose Heaven itself? Ah, Heaven is ours again. For in Him we have obtained an inheritance and are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And all this mischief is made to destroy itself, God overruling it to be its own destruction. The dragon stung with his own sting. Goliath killed with his own sword. Death is slain by the death of the Man who was crucified. Sin is put away by the great sin offering, who bore our sins in His own Body on the tree.

The grave is plagued by its own victim since Christ lay a captive within it. Satan casts out Satan in this case. We rise by man as by man we fell As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. The worm in whom Satan triumphed, is the worm in whom God is glorified. It was man whom Satan sought to make the instrument of Divine dishonor and it is man in whom God triumphs over all the crafts and cruelties of Hell. This the angels wonder at, for they see in this scheme of salvation, meeting as it does every mischief and meeting it on its own ground, the manifold wisdom of God.

Observe, also, that through the great scheme of salvation by the Atonement, God is more glorified than He would have been if there had been no Fall, and consequently no room for a redemption. The angels admire the manifold wisdom of God in the whole story of the human race, seeing that in the whole of it, from the beginning to the end, God is more glorified than He would have been had it all been written in letters of gold, without one sin or one suffering on the part of the human race. O Lord! When You did permit for a moment Your people to go astray like lost sheep, there might have been silence in Heaven, since Your enemy had triumphed, since the precious ones whom You had loved were given up into the hand of the enemy!

When the jewels of Christ were lost for a little season amidst the miry clay and ruins of the Fall, there might have been a furling of Jehovahs banner. For perhaps it seemed to angels as though God had been defeated in His highest praise. But when Christ comes back from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, wearing upon His royal head the crown in which every jewel is securely set that once was in the hand of the enemywhen the Shepherd comes back from the mountains, wearing on His shoulders the lost sheep which had gone astray, there is more joy in Heaven over the lost ones that are found again than there could have been over all of them had they never gone astray.

The deep bass of the Fall shall swell the song of the restoration. The hollow moans, as they seemed to be, when heard alone, shall but make a part of the grand swell of the eternal song, as it shall peal up to the Throne of the Lord God of Hosts. Brethren, if you would think for awhile upon the whole work of God, taking in it the Fall as being foreseen and foreknown, until the day when all the chosen seed shall meet around the Throne, I think you will be struck with its glory as a whole. It was within the compass of the power of God to make creatures that would love Him, to make beings that would be attached to Him by very close ties.

ButI speak with reverenceI do not see how Omnipotence itself, apart from the Fall and the Redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, when He gave Himself to die for us, could have made such creatures as the redeemed will be in Heaven. Brethren, if we had never fallen and never been redeemed, we could never have sung of redeeming Grace and dying love. We could not, and the angels could not. We could not have known the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Feasted with heavenly food, we might have admired His bounty, but not as we now do when we eat the flesh of Christ.

Made to drink the wine pressed from Heavens own clusters, we might have blessed the Giver of the feast, but not as we now can do, when we drink the blood of Jesus as our sweet wine, pure and holy. We could have praised Him and we should have done so, but not as we now can, when we have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is a nearer relationship now than there could have been in any other way, if God had not taken humanity into alliance with Himself, if the Word had not been made flesh and dwelt among us.

I say there may have been other plans but certainly no mortal mind can conceive any other. This seems to be the most wonderful, the most Godlike, the most Divine, that a creature shall be made perfectly free. That that creature shall offend, shall discover the justice of God through the punishment being laid upon a Substitute, but shall learn the love of God through that Substitute being God Himself! This creature was ordained to be attached to the Eternal One by ties of filial relationship, by bonds of affection so strong that the pains of the rack and the flames of the fire should not be able to separate it from the love of God.

And in Heaven this creature shall feel that it owes nothing to itself, nothing to its own natural efforts, but all to Him who loved it, and who bought it with His blood. And therefore this grateful being shall praise

God, after a sort, superior by many high degrees to the attainment of any other. Oh, dear Friends, I think if we study the subject for a few hours alone, we shall see that in nothing that God has done is there such a discovery of His wisdom as in the plan of redeeming love.

Go round about her, O angels of the Lord! Mark well her bulwarks and tell the towers thereofconsider her palaces. Behold the impregnable strength of Covenant engagements! See the largeness and broadness of electing love. Behold the veracity and truthfulness of Divine promises! See the fullness of Divine Grace and efficacy in the pardoning blood. See the faithfulness and the immovability of the Divine affection, when once it is set on men. And when you have admired the whole, go back, Spirits, and more sweetly than before, unite with us in our songWorthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor and blessing and majesty and power and dominion forever and ever.

II. Secondly, without a doubt the wisdom of God is made known to angels and principalities in THE VARIOUS DISPENSATIONS THROUGH WHICH THE CHURCH HAS PASSED.

At first the Church was, indeed, a little flock, a few chosen out of the massAbram, the Syrian, ready to perish and a few godly ones in his household. Then the stream widened a little and there became twelve tribes. And soon the dispensation became more clear. Moses was raised up, and Aaron, whom God had chosen. Then the angels desired to look into the typical rites and ceremonies of that ancient dispensation. They were pictured standing on the Mercy Seat, with wings outstretched, with their faces bent downwards as if they would gladly behold the secret which the golden lid concealed.

Doubtless, as they saw the sacrifice, whether it was the burnt offering, the peace offering, or the sin offeringas they saw the gorgeous ceremonies of the tabernacle, or the yet more splendid rites of the temple, they admired the wisdom of God, as it was set forth in the dim symbol and shadow. How much more must they have admired it, when the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing beneath His wings, when they saw the sacrifice superseded by the one great offering. The high priest set aside by the Man, who having once offered one sacrifice forever, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. How they have marveled since that time as truth after truth has been expounded in the experience of Believers, as doctrine after doctrine has been revealed to the Church of Christ by the illuminations of the Holy Spirit!

Oh, Brethren, the angels, when they compare the past with the present and again, the present with the pastthe choosing of the Jewish olive and the leaving out of the rest of the trees and then, the grafting-in of the Gentiles from the wild olive and the casting out of the natural brancheshow much they must have admired the singular variety of Gods dispensations, when they know, as certainly they do, that His Grace remains the same! In climbing or in descending a lofty mountain, one is struck with the sudden change of views. You looked on the right just now and you saw a populous city in the plain. But you turn a corner and looking through a break in the forest you see a broad lake.   
And in a moment or two your road winds again and you will see a narrow valley and another range of mountains beyond. Every time you turn, there is a new scene presented to you. So it would seem to the angelic spirits. When first they began to ascend the hill on which the Church stands, Mount Zion, which is above, the mother of us all, they saw the wisdom of God manifested as Abraham saw it. A turn in the road, and they saw it as Moses beheld it. Another, and they had a view as David was likely to gaze upon it. And then, when they ascended to clearer light, and the mists that hung about the mountainside had all been scattered and had fallen in one gracious shower of Divine Grace, they saw it as the Apostles beheld it when they stood upon Mount Olivet!

And since then, through every trial of the Church, as the eighteen centuries have rolled on since the Master went up to Heaven, they have been constantly catching fresh views and seeing fresh manifestations of the varied and constantly-changing wisdom of the unchanging God, as it is manifested in His dealings with the Church. So that both in the dispensations, as well as in the plan, there is made known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God.

III. Thirdly, to be brief upon each point, we may conclude, without any doubt, that they mainly see the wisdom of God in His Church, IN THE CHURCHS COVENANT HEAD AND REPRESENTATIVE.

Oh, when first they heard that the Lord of Life and Glory was to be made flesh and to dwell among us, how they must have admired the plan of Heavens going down to earth that earth might come up to Heaven! The Babe in the manger commanded all their songs. When they saw that Babe become a Man and heard Him preach, how they must have marveled at the wisdom of sending God Himself to be Gods own Prophet! When they saw that Man living a life of perfect holiness, how they must have clapped their wings at the thought that man could see perfection now in Gods own Self, shrouded in human form!

But when it came to Atonement and they learned that Gods people must be crucified in Christ, how struck must they have been, as the thought burst upon them for the first time, that the whole host of the elect were to sweat great drops of blood through one Manthat they were to be flagellated, to be scourged, bruised and spat upon, in one Manthat the host of the chosen were to carry the Cross of their condemnation upon one Mans shouldersthat that one Man was for them allto take all their load of guilt and, nailed to the tree, bleed away His life for the whole body!

Oh, I say, when they saw that lowly Man, with all the sins of the whole chosen company resting upon His shoulders and knew this solitary Man to be Godable to carry the wholethey must have marveled, indeed, at the wisdom of God. And when that triumphant Man cried, It is finished! having drained the cup of damnation to its utmost dregs, till there remained not one black drop for another of the elect to drinkwhen that one Man descended into the grave and the whole company of the faithful were buried with Him, oh, how they marveled!

When again they beheld the second Adam bursting His cerements, rending the chains of death as though, like another Samson, He had broken the green withes of the Philistines as though they were but thread, how astonished they were when they thought that the elect were risen in that glorified Person! And when that Man was received up into Heaven and the cloud hid Him from mortal view, how they rejoiced to see Him rise! But much more to think that we, also were risen in Him and in Him had ascended up on highin Him the whole Church, I say, leading their captivity captive!

When that representative Personage, with acclamation beyond all measure, rose to the throne of the Father and took His seat at the right hand of the dreadful Majesty on High, how wonderful must have been the admiration of the spirits when they thought that He had raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Perhaps there is no doctrine that is more astounding to Christians than this. I know if we want a theme that will enlarge our minds, the subject of the union of the chosen with Christ is certainly the most expansive

*O sacred union, firm and strong,   
How great the Grace, how sweet the song,   
That worms of earth should ever be   
One with incarnate Deity!  
One when He died, one when He rose,   
One when He triumphed over His foes;   
One when in Heaven He took His seat,   
And angels sang all Hells defeat.   
This sacred tie forbids all fears,   
For all He has and is ours;   
With Him our head we stand or fall,   
Our life, our surety and our all.*

The manifold wisdom of God, in thus constituting Christ the Covenant Head and representative of the elect in all its various shapes and shades, must have been discovered to angelic beings.

IV . Though that were a theme that might require a full discourse, we leave it at once to turn to another. In the fourth place, the manifold wisdom of God is made known to principalities and powers IN THE CONVERSION OF EVERY CHILD OF GOD.

There are some very singular implements in this present Great Exhibition. Marvelous feats of human skill. But there is one thing they have not there that is to be found in the Church of the living God and that is a heart-melter, an instrument for turning stone to flesh. There are inventions for melting granite and for liquefying flesh but I know of no invention, but one, and that is not to be found in any earthly show, for melting the adamant of the human heart.

Now when the Lord takes the profane man, or the infidel, or the proud, self-righteous Pharisee, or some tall, intimidating, careless sinner, and casts his heart into a fountain filled with Jesus blood, and it begins to melt with penitence, the angels see the matchless wisdom of God. But I am sure, also, that there is not in the Exhibition another instrument called a heart-healeran invention for binding up broken hearts and making them one again and healing all their wounds. But the Lord is pleased by the same instrument by which He breaks hearts to heal them.

That blood which melts the flint restores us the heart of flesh. Having first melted the heart, He next shows His matchless skill by taking away despair, despondency and terror, and giving to the poor conscience perfect peace and restnoexulting joy and boundless liberty. As the angels see the proud man bow his knee, as they hear him in his silent chamber pour out his heart in sighs and groans, they say, It is well, great God, it is well. And as they see him come down from that chamber, light of foot, and joyous of heart, because his sin is all forgiven, with his groans all turned into songs, the angels say, It is well, great God, it is well. You wound, but You heal. You kill and You make alive.

Conversion is the greatest prodigy that we know of. If there are no such things as miracles today, believe me, I have neither eyes nor ears. But you say, What miracles? I answer, not miracles in smitten rocks that yield rivers of water or seas that are divided by prophetic rods, but miracles in hearts and consciences, obedient to holy, heavenly power. I have seen in my short life more miracles, and stranger miracles than Moses ever worked, and wonders as great as Christ Jesus Himself ever performed on flesh and blood. For they are His miracles today that are worked through the Gospel.

If it were appropriate just now, I might point to some in these galleries and on this ground floor and ask them to tell what miracles God did for them and how they are here in one happy circle today met for the praise of God. Men who once were everything that was vile. But they are washed, they are sanctified. The tears start in their eyes now when they think of the drunkards cup and of the swearers oath with which they were once so well acquainted. Ah, too, and of the dens and kens of filth and of lasciviousness which they once knew. And they are here, loving and praising their Lord. Oh, there are some in this house today who, if they could speak, would say they are the greatest sinners out of Hell and the mightiest wonders out of Heaven!

If our Gospel is hid, it is only hid to those who willfully shut their eyes to it. When one sees harlots reclaimed, thieves, drunkards, swearers made to be saints of the living God, do not tell us that the Gospel has lost its power. O Sirs! Do not dream that we shall believe you while we can see this power, while we can feel it in our own souls, while every day we hear of conversions, while scarce a week rolls on without some score of brands being plucked from the eternal burning! And, I say, if the Church of God on earth admires these conversions, what must angels do who are more acquainted with the guilt of sin and know more of the loveliness of holiness and understand better the secret heart of man than we do?

How must they gladly and exultingly admire in each distinct conversion as it presents phases different from any other, the manifold wisdom of God! That ingenious toy called the kaleidoscope at every turn presents some near form of beauty, so the different converts who are brought to Christ by the preaching of the Word are every one unlike the other. There is something to distinguish each case. By them, to the very letter, our text is proved, the manifold wisdom, the much varied wisdom of God is displayed.

I have sometimes understood the word manifold as comparing Grace to a precious treasure that is wrapped up in many folds. First this, then the next, then the next, must be unfolded. And as you unwrap fold after fold, you find something precious each time. But it will be long before you and I shall have unwrapped the last fold and shall have found the wisdom of God in its pure glittering luster, lying stored within as the angels behold it in the Church of the living God.

V. But time has failed me, and therefore I must leave points upon which I wanted to dwell. The principalities and powers to this day find great opportunities for studying the wisdom of God in THE TRIALS AND EXPERIENCE OF BELIEVERS, in the wisdom which subjects them to trial, in the Divine Grace which sustains them in it, in the power which brings them out of it, in the wisdom which overrules the trial for their good, in the Grace which makes the trial fit the back or strengthens the back for the burden.

They see wisdom in the prosperity of Christians when their feet stand like hinds feet upon their high places. They see the same in the despondencies of Believers when even in the lowest depths they still say, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. As every day brings to us our daily bread, so every day brings to Heaven its daily theme of wonder, and the angels receive fresh stores of knowledge from the ever-new experience of the people of God.

They lean from the battlements of Heaven today to gaze on you, you tried Believers. They look into your furnace as did the King of Babylon and they see the fourth man with you like unto the Son of God. They track you, O you children of Israel in the wilderness. They see the places of your encampment and the land to which you are hastening. And as they mark the fiery cloudy pillar that conducts you and the Angel of Gods house that leads the van and brings up the rear, they discover in every step of the way the wonderful wisdom of God.

VI. And lastly, beyond all controversy, WHEN THE LAST OF GODS PEOPLE SHALL BE BROUGHT IN and the bright angels shall begin to wander through the heavenly plains and converse with all the redeemed spirits, they will then see the manifold wisdom of God. Let the angel speak awhile for himself. Here, he says, I see men of all nations and kindreds and tongues, from Britain to Japan, from the frozen north to the burning zone beneath the equator. Here I see souls of all ages, babes here snatched from the womb and breast, and spirits that once knew palsied age to whom the grasshopper was a burden.

Here I see men from all periods, from Adam and Abel down to the men who were alive and remained at the coming of the Son of God from Heaven. Here I see them from the days of Abraham, and the times of David and the period of the Apostles and the seasons of Luther and of Wickliffe, even to the last times of the Church. Here I see them of all classes. There is one who was a king and at his side, as his fellow, is another that tugged the oar as a galley-slave. There I see a merchant prince who counted not his riches dear unto him and by his side a poor man who was rich in faith and heir of the kingdom.

There I see the poet who could sing on earth of Paradise lost and regained and by his side one who could not put two words together but who knew the Paradise lost and the Paradise regained within the Eden of his own nature, the garden of his own heart. Here I see Magdalene and Saul of Tarsus, repenting sinners of all shades and saints of all varieties, those who showed their patience on a lingering sick bed, those who triumphed with holy boldness amid the red flames, those who wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy.

The monk who shook the world and he who cast salt into the stream of doctrine and made it wholesome and pure. The man who preached to his millions and brought tens of thousands of souls to Christ and the humble cottager who knew but this Bible true and herself the partaker of the life of Christhere they all are. And as the spirits wander and look first at this and then at thatfirst one trophy of Divine Grace and then at another monument of mercy, they will all exclaim, How manifold are Your works, O God! In wisdom have You made them all. Heaven is full of Your goodness which You have worked for the sons of men.

And now, dear Friends, the sermon is done, when I ask you just these questions. The first shall be a question for the children of God and the other for those who know Him not. First, to the children of God. Do you think you and I have sufficiently considered that we are always looked upon by angels and that they desire to learn by us the wisdom of God? The reason why our sisters appear in the House of God with their heads covered is because of the angels. The Apostle says that a woman is to have a covering upon her head, because of the angels, since the angels are present in the assembly and they mark every act of indecorum and therefore everything is to be conducted with decency and order in the presence of the angelic spirits.

Think of that, then, when this afternoon we shall be talking together. Let us not talk in such a way that a visitor from Heaven might be grieved with us. And when we are in our general assemblies met together, let us not discuss ignoble themes but let the matters which we discuss be truly edifying, seasoned with salt. Especially in our families, might we not say more about Christ than we do? Do we not often spend days, perhaps weeks, without making any mention of such things as we could wish angels to hear?

You are watched, Brethren, you are watched by those that love you. The angels love us and bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against the stones. They encamp about our habitations. Let us entertain these royal guests. Since they cannot eat our bread and sit at our table to partake of our good cheer, let us talk of subjects which will delight them in a manner with which they shall be gratified. And let their presence be to us a motive why we should so conduct ourselves that to angels and principalities may be made known by us the wisdom of God.

And, lastly, what do some of you think angels would say of your walk and conversation? Well, I suppose you dont care much about them and yet you should. For who, but angels, will be the reapers at the last and who but they shall be the convoy to our spirits across the last dark stream? Who but they shall carry our spirit like that of Lazarus into the Fathers bosom? Surely we should not despise them. What has your conduct been? Ah, Sirs, it need not that the preacher speak. Let Conscience have her perfect work. There are some here over whom angels, could their eyes have known a tear, would have wept day and night.

You have been almost persuaded to be Christians. You have known the struggles of conscience, and you have said, I would to God I were altogether such as the saints are! But you are unconverted still. Stay, Spirit, guardian Spirit, you who has watched over this son of a sainted mother, wing not back your disappointed flight to Heaven! He relents, he relents! Now the Spirit of God is moving in him. It shall be, he says, it shall be. I repent and believe in Jesus, but oh, Spirit, you will be disappointed yet, for he is about to say, In a little time, go your way for a little season, when I have a more convenient season I will send for you.

Angel, you will be disappointed yet, but if the soul shall say, Now, even now, in this House of Prayer, I cast myself upon the finished Atonement of Christ. I trust in Him to save me, wing your flight aloft, you glorious angel! Tell the cherubs around the Throne of God that the prodigal has returned and an heir of Heaven has been born! Let Heaven keep holiday and let us go into our homes rejoicing, for he that was dead is alive again and he that was lost is found!

May the Spirit of God do this, for Jesus sake! Amen.   
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ANGELIC STUDIES   
NO. 933

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 1, 1870 BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might   
be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. Ephesians 3:10.

THE principalities and powers in heavenly places to whom the Apostle here refers, are, no doubt, the angels. These bright and glorious spirits, never having fallen into sin, did not need to be redeemed, and therefore, in the sense of being cleansed from guilt, they have no share in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Yet it is interesting to notice how our Lord did, as it were, pass and pass again their shining ranks when He sped His way down to the regions of death, and when He came back triumphant to the realms of Glory.

Thus in one place we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and in another place we learn, that the Father raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion. It is possible that the mediation of Christ has a bearing upon them, and has from now on confirmed them in their holiness, so that by no means shall they ever be tempted or led into sin in the future. It may be so, but this much seems to be evident, that though they had no direct share in redemption, they feel, nevertheless, an interest in it, and are to be instructed by its results.

The sublime plan of the Gospel of the Grace of God, which is so entirely beyond the compass of our natural faculties that we could never, by searching, have found it out, appears to have been equally beyond the grasp of angelic intelligence. It was a mystery that excited their wistful enquiryuntil by the Church (that is to say, by the Divine Counsel and conduct in forming and perfecting the Church) there is made known unto them the manifold wisdom of God as they have never learned it before. They have kept their first estate, and have been obedient to Gods behests. They delight to be known as the servants of God, doing His commandments, and hearkening unto the voice of His Word.

They are appointed to exercise some sort of power over various parts of

Gods creation, therefore they are called principalities and powers. Certainly they are engaged in singing Jehovahs praise. Much of the music that rises up before His Throne comes from the harps of spirits, pure and immaculate, who have never known sin. Yet, though they are thus pure, thus engaged in worship, of such eminent rank in the universe of God, they are never represented as indifferent spectators of anything which our mortal race can do or suffer, but their sympathy with men is constant.

Do they not watch over the saints? Is it not written, that they encamp round about them that fear the Lord? Are they not charged to take care of the saints, to bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their feet against the stones? Angels, we know, have often been messengers of Gods will to the sons of men. They have never shown any reluctanceon the contrary, great has been their joy to bear Gods tidings down from Heaven to earth. And their sympathy even with fallen men, with men who have grievously sinned and gone astray, is shown by the fact that they rejoice over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.

They are, as it were, in yonder gilded vessel, untossed of tempest. But they have sympathy with us in this poor heavy-laden boat, tossed with tempest and not comforted. I see them there on yonder sea of glass mingled with fire. I hear their harps, as incessantly their joy goes up in music to the Throne of the Most High. But they do not look down with scorn on us poor denizens of this dusky planet. On the contrary, they delight to think of us as their Brethren, as their fellow servants, as it will be the consummation of their happiness when we shall all be gathered to the Church of the First-Born, that they shall make up the innumerable company of angels that surround the blood-washed throng.

I. The subject of our meditation, which will be brief, resolves itself into a question, HOW EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH THE CHURCH DO ANGELS COME TO SEE THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD? Some other matters in connection with this we shall have to speak of afterwards.

Who can doubt that the angels had seen much of the wisdom of God in creation? With faculties keener and more elevated than ours, faculties that have never been blunted by sin, they can perceive the various contrivances of Gods skill both in the animate and the inanimate world. Doubtless as each new star has been minted by God, as each planet has been struck off like a spark from the everlasting anvil, angels, those sons of the morning, have lifted up their songs, and have poured forth their paeans of joy and gladness.

They have seen the wisdom of God in the greatness of creationin every sphere they have been able to perceive it, for their vision is far more comprehensive than ours. And they have also, no doubt, seen that wisdom in all its minuteness as manifest in the delicate structure of organized beings, and the skillful economy of the operations of creative power. For there again they are able with the singleness and certainty of superior optics to perceive what only after long years we have been able to discoverand that by reasoning from the ingenuity of the works to the excellence of the design.

What a scale of survey must a seraph have! How readily can we imagine an eye that takes in at once the landscape of the world! He need not confine himself to one single spot in Gods universe, but with rapid wings he can steer far and wide over the infinity of space. May he not pause here a moment and there a moment, and with a glance peer into the multiform wisdom of God in all the ten thousand thousand worlds that stud the realms of space? Yet with all that facility of observation, it seems that the angels have some parts of the wisdom of God to learn. They have some lessons of heavenly science to study which creation cannot unfold to their viewto be ascertained and certified by them only through the transcendent work of Redemption which the Lord has carried on in His Church.

Fix your attention for a moment on the word now as it is used in the text. On that word, it seems to me, much of the meaning hangs. Long before our Lord came into the world God had been pleased to reveal somewhat of the wisdom of His Grace in the types of the old Law. These were full of significance, but at the same time not free from perplexity to the minds of most men. They appear not to have been very intelligible, even to the angels, for they are pictured as standing over the Mercy Seat, with wings outspread, looking down upon its golden lid, anxiously enquiring, but not clearly discovering the secret of the old Covenant dispensation.

Peter says, I suppose in allusion to this, which things the angels desire to look into. But Paul here vehemently sets forth the yearnings of his heart in the exercise of his ministry, to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

May we not infer from this that though angels saw Moses and Aaron, and the long succession of priests that followed them. Though they doubtless mingled invisibly in the solemn gatherings that went up to Mount Zion, and heard the chants of the glorious Psalms. Though they saw the streams of blood that flowed at the altar of burnt offering, and marked the rising clouds of smoke that went up from the altar of incense that was in the Holy Place before the Lord, they had not as yet discovered the wisdom of God in its fullness and clearness, the spotless mirror of His power, the reflex image of His glorious perfection?   
But it must have remained for them to learn it from the Church! Since

Christ has come, angels are to be students of the manifold wisdom of God as revealed in His work towards His people, preparing them for that grand climaxthe espousal of the Church and the marriage of the Lamb. To come closer to the matter we must trace it progressively, as though it were step by step that the angels pursued their study, and acquired an insight into this manifold wisdom. It may be they do so. Certainly among the children of men there is much pleasure in the getting of knowledge. The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

As we gradually break up fresh ground, decipher that which is obscure, sift out analogies, solve difficulties, and follow out the tracks of history in one continuous line, our enjoyment of study rises to enthusiasm. Do you not think that the angels perceived the manifold wisdom of God now that they began to understand what man was and what man is? They must have already seen that God had created an order of pure spirits who served Him faithfully and never sinned. There was one form of wisdom displayed in that. Other spirits, equally pure, went astray, and in the wisdom of Godfor there is wisdom in itthese were suffered to continue astray, reserved in chains until the judgment.

Soon the angels perceived that God was about to make another intelligent creature, not altogether spiritual, but a spiritual creature that should be linked with materialism, a creature that should abide in a body of clay. And that God intended to make this creature a mixture of earth and Heavensuch a one that he should occupy the place which fallen angels had left vacant. They discerned in this at once the wisdom of God. He had formed a pure spirit. He had fashioned material substances. Now He was about to make a creature in which the two should be combined, a creature that should be spiritual, and yet should be material.

But before this creature should be permitted to take his place forever at the right hand of God, he was to be permitted to pass the test of temptation. Being tempted, he was to fall into sin. Out of the condemnation into which he should sink he was to be elevated by an act of Divine Grace. From the guilt of that sin he was to be cleansed by a matchless system of substitutionary sacrifice. And then, after having been alienated in heart, he should nevertheless become as pure as if he had never been conscious of evil! And contaminated with it, he should be redeemed from it and stand in allegiance to the Most High, to serve Him with as absolute a perfection as if he had never transgressed or lost his first estate.

Herein is manifold wisdom, that the Lord God should make so strange a creature, that He should be formed of the dust of the ground, and yet created in the image of God. A creature that should know sin, and whatever of pleasure there might be in it, and yet be restored to purity and holiness. A creature who though awhile estranged in heart, and guilty of rebelling with a high hand against his Creator, should return to its allegiance through the infinitely wise workings of Gods Spirit, and from now on should remain forever the liege servant of God! And, something more, the child of God would be lifted up and exalted into a nearness of connection and intimacy of communion with the Great Father of Spirits into which no creature had ever been brought before! In that grand design, the angels must have seen much of the sublime wisdom of God, and that conspicuously through the Church.

But, Brethren, may not the admiration of angels at the unfolding of this wisdom have been increased by the mystery in which it had long been shrouded from their apprehension? Observe that Paul was exulting in a revelation which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit. What use will he make of it? First he looks round among the saints and sounds the note of welcome. Then he looks out among his fellow men and proclaims it to the Gentile world. And at length he looks up and descries among the angelic throng, creatures of noble mind and exalted rank, who could sympathize the joy and hail the solution of so grand a problem.

Be it remembered that the decree had previously been proclaimed from the throne of the Most High, for, when He brings the First-Begotten into the world, He says, Let all the angels of God worship Him. Yet the means by which the counsels of God concerning Christ and the Church should be brought to pass had not thus far been shown. With what pleasing wonderment, therefore, would the principalities and powers in heavenly places regard the plan as it was unsealed! How well might the Apostle look forward to those ages to come which have yet to prove the reality of all that has been foreshadowed!

The Truth of all that has been prophesied. And (the work now in progress being completed) the actual form and fashion of all that from the beginning was predestinated. Even while the mystery was unexplained, it was not for pure angelic minds to doubt. Still their thoughts must have been full of marvel, and startling questions must have occurred to them. Shall the Only-Begotten Son of the Father take the nature of man into union with the Godhead? Can it be safe to put such a creature as man into so sublime a relationship with the Creator? Will pride never inflame his breast and provoke his soul to transgress? By what strange process shall he be made meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light?

While the details are concealed, the destiny seems incomprehensible. It is therefore that the Church becomes as a museum which angels may visit with ever-expanding interest and ever-increasing delight. Over the minutest particulars of the Divine workmanship in the saints they may

pore with pleasure. For there they have open to their observation by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. And all this redounds to the glory of the Savior. That creature, man, when thus elevated, can never be proud, for he remembers what he was. If ever the feeling of exultation crosses his mind, he transfers the honor to Christ, who can receive it as his rightful due.

There is not in Heaven, of all the creatures, a humbler creature, though none more elevatedmade to have dominion over all the works of Gods hands, with all things put under his feet. He is made to be akin to Deity itself by virtue of union with the Son of God, and yet safe to stand there, without cause to fear that he should pervert his high prerogative or usurp any adoration or prerogative which does not belong to him. The process through which he has passedhis annealing, as it were, in the fire of his fall and of his repentancehis deep obligations to Sovereign Grace, shall make it safe to grant that he shall sit with Christ on His Throne. Even as Christ also overcame, and is set down with his Father on His Throne.

I talk of these things feebly and superficially, but I am persuaded that this is a subject which angels can think of with enchantment, and as they think it over they see transparent proofs of the manifold wisdom of God. But to come down to more familiar topics. Probably you will be more impressed with the excellence of this wisdom as you look at the first principles of Christianity, than if you would arrest your attention in any refinements of reasoning. The wisdom of God is clearly seen by angels in this that though God was dishonored in this world by sinthat sin has redounded to His greater honor.

Satan, when he led men astray and tempted them to rebel, thought he had marred the Glory of God, but he never did more palpably outwit God. As Augustine ventured to say of the Fall, Happy thought, so, when we see how Gods mercy and His love have shone resplendent through that dreadful breach, we can only admire the wisdom of God which has thus outmatched the subtlety of Hell. The serpent was exceedingly wise, but God was far wiser. Satans craft was dexterous, but Gods wisdom was infinite in its prescience. Wisdom has outmatched craft. Is it not glorious to think that this world where God was dishonored most is the world where He shall be most revered?

There is no such display of the attributes and perfections of Godhead in the whole universe beside as there is here. On our blighted soil God has stood foot to foot with moral evil. God incarnate, the Son of God, has sustained the conflict, and won the victory! While the heel of Christ was bruised, the head of the dragon has been most effectually broken! A triumph that God would have us commemorate in time and in eternity has come through the sin that threatened the destruction of the world.

This wisdom of God is to be seen in the way that our redemption was worked. The doctrine of Substitution is a marvel which, if God had never revealed, none of us could by any possibility have discovered. You remember how it was. We had sinned and were condemned. How could God be gracious and yet be just? How could He keep His Law and yet at the same time show His mercy towards us? Of old that problem was solved by the Suretyship of Christ. He who had determined to be Man put Himself from before the foundation of the world into our place, and offered Himself to God as the Head of the race in Covenant that He might make recompense to the broken Law.

Angels could not have conjectured this, but when it was made known to them, how could they refrain to chant fresh songs to the praise of Him who could undertake so loving a responsibility? It became necessary when Christ was our Surety, that He should afterwards take upon Himself our nature. Oh, how it must have surprised the angels when they heard that the Son of God was coming down to earth to be born of a virgin! What marvel must there have been when the announcement was made through the courts of Paradise that He was going down to Bethlehem!

One of the angelic number who had been sent to attend Him proclaimed His advent, but while he was making the announcement, Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, who now came in to swell the song, Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, good will toward men. The swell of that musichow grand! The cadence of those simple wordshow charming! Yes, the angels must have discovered something of the wisdom of God when they saw that God thus tabernacled among men, that the Word was made flesh in order to be capable of carrying out His surety-engagements, and really become a Substitute for those who had offended.

I think His whole life must have struck them with wonder. They must often have observed wisdom in His actions and in His prayers, in His speech and in His silence. But, when at last He came to die, methinks even cherubim and seraphim were wrapt in amazement. That He should stoop from Heaven and become a friend to the fallen race might surprise them much. But that He should stoop to die must have appeared utterly incomprehensible! Something more of the love and wisdom of God should yet be revealed to them. I think our hymn must fitly describe how they gathered round that Cross

*And could their eyes have known a tear,   
They must have wept it there.*

When they beheld the griefs and torments of the dying Son of God, the Lamb of Gods Passoverwhen they heard Him say, It is finished!what a door must have been opened to them! They saw, then, that He had finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. And then, perhaps, they saw more clearly than before how Christ, by suffering, put an end to our sufferings. And by being made a curse for us had made us the righteousness of God in Him. If they marvelled during the three days of His slumber in the tomb, His Resurrection must have opened up another door to them. And, when after His forty days sojourn, they came to meet Him with glad acclaim.

When they joined Him, and with Him rode up to the gates of Heaven, singing, Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in. When they came in triumph with the Lord mighty in battle, the King of Glory, in that procession to His Throne, they must still have been more and more amazed, and said one to another, What thing is this? What mighty marvel! He that became Man to suffer, is the very One that now rises to reign. He who was born to die now lives forevermore. Behold, He is now the Head over all things, and made to have dominion over all the works of Gods hands, for it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell!

Thus, Brethren, though time and voice fail me, permit me to say the whole history of our blessed Lord, who is the Head of the Church, is making known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God in such a way as they never could have otherwise seen it.

The wisdom of God is seen through the Church in the Holy Spirits work as well as in the work of Christ. It is manifold wisdom. You know the childrens toy, the kaleidoscope. Every time you turn it there is some fresh form of beauty. You seldom see the same form twice. So it is with nature, each time and season has its special beauty. There is always variety in its scenerydiversities of form and color are strewn throughout the world. You never saw two hills molded in the same pattern, or two rivers that wound after the same fashion from their source down to the sea. Nature is full of variety. So is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In calling sinners to Christ, there is singleness of purpose but no uniformity of means. Your conversion, my dear Friend, in the main outline, is very much like mineyet your conversion has its distinctive incidents. Gods wisdom is displayed equally in bringing you in that way, and in bringing me in another way. I believe there will be found evidence at the last of the wisdom of God in the very date, the very place, the very means in and by which every soul is brought to believe in Jesus. And angels will, no doubt, be able to perceive in every conversion some singular marks of beautiful originality proceeding from the inexhaustible Artist of Grace, the Holy Spirit.

That same wisdom will be seen in the biography of every converthow the Lord afflicts, or how He comforts. How He upholds us, how He keeps back that which cannot yet be endured. How He gently leads us, how He makes us to lie down. We find fault, sometimes, with the way of Providence because we do not understand it. When we shall get a clearer sight of it we shall see that every mark and line was dictated by His love, and ordered by His Infinite Counsel. As each Christian shall be conformed to the likeness of Christ, angels will see in the products of Grace fresh displays of the manifold wisdom of God.

I could suppose that the death of a martyr must be such a spectacle as those holy watchers regard with extraordinary interest. Would they not have gathered around such a woman as Blandina, for instance, who was made to sit in a red-hot chair, after having been tossed upon the horns of a wild bull? Yet constant to the last, she maintained her faith in Christ while passing through the torture! Pure spirits as they were, they must have commiserated the physical anguish and admired the spiritual triumph of this feeble woman thus devoted in her love to their Lord and Master.

Yes, you ministering spirits, you who live to serve our Eternal King, surely you must rejoice at the loyalty of those servants of His who die for His Truth. In late years, since this House of Prayer was built, when the martyrs of Madagascar were burned at their stakes for Christas they stood erect in the fire, and began to singthe angels, celestial vocalists as they are, must have been ravished with a music that they could not emulate. And when they breathed the prayer, Into your hands we commend our spirits, the angels must almost have envied them the ability of serving God in that sphere of suffering, and the possibility of bearing in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Yes, and when they have seen your boldness and your constancy, your self-denial, and your patience. And when they have heard your importunate prayers and groans, as you have pleaded for the souls of others, seeking with tears to bring others to Jesus, I do not doubt that they have ascribed to the manifold wisdom of God the production of such luscious fruits from such inferior creatures! Fruits that bring to His name so much of Glory, and so much of renown to His Grace. In all the saints, through the history of their vocation and the development of their sanctification, angels can discern the manifold wisdom of God.

The subject is far too large for me. I shall leave you to think it out, after thus introducing you to but a few aspects of it. There is much room for meditation as to how these bright and happy spirits do and shall see the

wisdom of God in the salvation of the Church.  
II. But do you now ask, DO ANGELS GAIN ANYTHING BY THE   
CHURCH OF GOD? I think they do. Certainly they acquire increased   
knowledge. With us knowledge is sometimes sorrow. To know is often to   
mourn. What the eye does not see the heart does not rue. Where ignorance is blissand it sometimes isthere are those who think, it is folly   
to be wise. But ignorance is not bliss in Heaven. Knowledge increases the   
joy of the angels, and I will tell you whybecause it makes them take a   
greater delight in God when they see how wise and gracious He is. If it is   
possible for the angels to be happier than natural innocence and honorable service can render them, they must be happier through knowing and   
seeing more of God, as His attributes are reflected and His perfections   
mirrored forth in the Church.   
Angels, methinks, will be enriched by the society of the saints in   
Heaven. Commerce always enriches, and commerce between angelic and   
human natures will be enriching to them both. They love in Heaventhey   
show their love by rejoicing over repenting men. They will be glad to see   
us there. I do believe they will make much of us, as we do if we have seen   
some poor child reclaimed, and afterwards grow up to honor. We like to   
think of such an one. It brings the tears into our eyes that our Father did   
so good a deed for the orphan, the pauper, or the outcast. And will not the   
angels rejoice over those in whom the Fathers mercy has worked such  
wonderful happiness?   
Again, to my imagining (can it be illusive?) angels are gainers by the   
Church because they get nearer to the Throne of God than they were before. Another order of beings, our own to wit, is advanced. Surely when  
one creature gets near to God, all unfallen creatures are promoted. God,  
in vital union with the creature, was not to be conceived of until Christ   
came down to earth, and clothed Himself in manhood, thus raising creatureship nearer to God by just that length. So angels, by inference, seem   
to me interested in the honor that Jehovah has put on His worksthe endowed works of His own formation.   
Do you not think, too, that perhaps they can see God better in Christ  
than even they did before? Is it not possible that even they who first did   
veil their faces with their wings in the presence of the Almighty, because   
the brightness of glory was excessive, may now stand with unveiled faces   
and worship God in Christ? I think it is so. They never saw much of God  
before until they saw God veiled in human flesh. There was too dazzling a   
splendor for them till the interposing medium of the manhood of Christ  
came in between them and the absolute Deity. It may be so.   
And may not there be a reflex sense of gratitude in the very heart of   
angels when they see us in Heaven, or while they see us wending our way   
there? They perceive what it would have cost to have restored them had   
they been beguiled by sin, and therefore what debtors they are to God that   
they were never suffered to fall. Does it not make their state and standing  
more and more joyful to them when they see in us how the righteous   
scarcely are saved, and at what an expense men were lifted up from the   
ruins of death and the dread doom of the damned?   
Why, methinks they say not one to another, with PhariseeismWe   
thank You, great God, that we are not as men are. No, they say, with lowliness of mindWe bless You, O God, that we were permitted to stand in  
our fidelity, and were not left to the natural weakness which might have   
succumbed to temptation, for You charged even Your angels with folly,   
but You have held us, and here we are to bless Your name. It may be so.  
It may be so.   
III. Let me detain you one minute more while we meet the question,   
WHAT IS ALL THIS TO US? Ought it not to make us prize the Gospel? If  
the angels think so much of it, oh, what should we think? If they who   
have only seen it, esteem it so, how ought we to value it who have tasted   
it? If they admire the veins that filled the Fountain, what shall we say who   
have washed in that Fountain? If they wonder at Christ, who took not on  
Him the nature of angels, how shall we admire Him who espoused the   
house of Abraham and the seed of Adam? Let us appreciate the Gospel  
beyond all price, emolument, or honor.   
How, too, should we study it, if it is the research of angelic intellects! Is   
the Church their schoolbook from where they learn lessons of the Divine   
wisdom, because no science is equal to that of the wisdom of God in   
Christ revealed in His Church? O be not, you converts, ignorant of the   
Word of God! Be not oblivious of the operations of God in your own souls!  
The angels desire to look into these things. Do you look into them?  
Blessed shall you be if you abide in the study of the Word of God! You   
shall be like trees planted by the rivers of water that bring forth their fruit  
in their season. O do apply every faculty you have to acquire increasing  
knowledge of that which angels love to study.   
And now take courage, you feeble-minded ones, and never fear again   
the sneer of the man who calls the Gospel folly. Account him to be the victim of folly who despises this manifold wisdom. Shall I set the judgment of   
a poor puny mortal against the judgment of an angel? I suppose that even   
Newton, and Kepler, and Locke, and those mighty master spirits, would be   
mere infants compared with seraphs. Those great men loved to study the   
Scriptures, and when your modern pretenders to a little smack of philosophy come in and sneer at our holy Gospel, we can well afford to sneer at   
them. What are their sneers to us?   
In proportion to a mans ignorance is generally his impudence when he   
meddles with the Gospel. I think it was Hume who confessed that he had   
never read the New Testament and said he never would. Yet he was one of  
the most glib in caviling at that of which he knew nothing. Ah, you skeptics, pretenders, and scofferswe can well afford to let you rail. But you   
can ill afford to rail when angels are awed into wonder, and so would you  
be if there were anything angelic about your temper, or anything of right   
wisdom in your attainments.   
Last of all. If this is so, how we ought to love Christ, we who has a saving interest in it, and how they ought to tremble who have it not! Unsaved   
Men! Unsaved Women! If it needs manifold wisdom to save men, then  
mens ruin must be very great, and your peril must be very imminent. If it   
amazes angels to see how God saves, it must be a terrible destruction  
from which He saves them. That destruction is coming upon youits dark  
shadows have already began to gather round you. How great your folly to   
refuse a salvation so wise, to reject a Savior so attractive as Jesus! Think of His loving gentleness and consider the simple way in which He   
savesbelieve and live! The supplies necessary for your salvation are all   
waiting. There is nothing to be done. It is all complete. There is nothing to   
be found. It is all ready. Salvation is finished. What a fool must he be that  
will not have it! O stretch out your withered hand and take it! God give   
you power. If you say How? I answer thusTrust, trust, trust! Come and  
confide in Christ. Rely upon Christ, and He will save you. God grant you   
Grace to do it at once, and He shall have the praise. Amen.

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SAINTS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH ONE FAMILY   
NO. 1249

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 8, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

The whole family in Heaven and earth.   
Ephesians 3:15.

BEREAVEMENTS are among the sorest griefs of this mortal life. We are permitted by God to love those whom He gives to us and our heart eagerly casts its tendrils around them and, therefore, when suddenly the beloved objects are withdrawn by death, our most tender feelings are wounded. It is not sinful for us to lament the departure of friends, for Jesus wept. It would be unnatural and inhuman if we did not mourn for the departed we should be less feeling than the beasts of the field. The stoic is not a Christian, and his spirit is far removed from that of the tender-hearted Jesus.

The better the friend, the greater our regret at his loss, although there also lies within that fact more abundant sources of consolation. The mourning for Josiah was very sore because he was so good a prince. Because Stephen was so full of the Holy Spirit, and so bold for the faith, devout men carried him to his burial and made great lamentation over him. Dorcas was wept for and bewailed because of her practical care for the poor. Had they not been true saints, the mourning had not been so great.

Brethren, we cannot but sorrow this day, for the Lord has taken away a Sister in Christ, a true servant of the Church. She was a consecrated woman wholl he honored above many, and to whom He gave many crowns of rejoicing. And we cannot but sorrow all the more because so loving a mother in Israel has fallen asleep, so useful a life has come to a close and so earnest a voice is hushed in silence. I have, this day, lost from my side one of the most faithful, fervent and efficient of my helpers. And the Church has lost one of her most useful members. Beloved, we need comfort! Let us seek it where it may be found.

I pray that we may view this source of grief, not with our natural, but with our spiritual eyes. The things external are for the natural eye and from that eye they force full many a tear, for in his natural life man is the heir of sorrow. But there is an inward and spiritual life which God has given to Believersand this life has an inner eyeand to this inner eye there are other scenes presented than the senses can perceive. Let that spiritual vision indulge itself now. Close your eyes as much as your tears will permit you to the things which are seen, for they are temporal and shadowy, and look to the eternal, secret, Truths of God, for these are realities.

Take a steady look into the invisible, and the text, I think, sets before us something to gaze upon which may minister comfort to us. The saints in Heaven, though apparently separate from us, are, in reality, one with us! Though death seems to have made breaches in the Church of God, it is, in fact, perfect and entire. Though the inhabitants of Heaven and Believers on earth might seem to be two orders of beings, yet in truth they are one family.

*Let all the saints terrestrial sing,   
With those to Glory gone;   
For all the servants of our King   
In earth and Heaven are one.*

So sings the poet. The text tells us that there is a whole family. It speaks not of a broken family, nor of two families, but of, the whole family in Heaven and earth. It is still one undivided household, notwithstanding all the graves which crowd the cemetery.

To this thought I shall call your attention, hoping that thereby you may enter into that one communion, in which saints above are bound up with saints below. I invite you to consider the ties which bind us to those who have gone before, and the indissoluble kinship in Christ which holds us as much as ever in one sacred unity.

I. First, let us think of THE POINTS OF THIS GREAT FAMILY UNION. In what respects are the people of our God in Heaven and earth our family? We answer, in very many, for their family relationship is so ancient, so certain and so paramount, that it may be seen in a vast variety of ways. Let us note, first, concerning those in Heaven and earth whom the Lord loves that their names are all written in one family register.

That mystical roll which eye has not seen contains all the names of His chosen. They are born by degrees, but they are chosen at onceby one decree set apart from the rest of mankindby one declaration, They shall be Mine, separated forever as hallowed things unto the Most High! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, in which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

We like to keep our own family registers. We are pleased to look back to the place where our parents recorded our names with those of our brothers and sisters. Let us gaze by faith upon that great Book of Life where all the names of the redeemed stand indelibly written by the hand of Everlasting Love. And as we read those beloved names, let us remember that they make but one record. The faithful of modern times are on the same page with the saints of the Old Testament, and the names of the feeblest among us are written by the same hand which inscribed the Apostles and the martyrs!

We confidently believe that Mrs. Bartletts name is found in the same roll which contains yours, my Sister, though you may be the most obscure of the Lords daughters. Even as you are called in one hope of your calling, so were you all comprehended in one election of Grace. The saints above and below are also one family in the Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, made with them in the Person of their one great federal Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly one are all the members of the human race in our first father, Adam, for in Adam we all fell.

We realize that we are one family by the common sweat of the face, the common tendency to sin, the common liability to deathbut there is a second Adam, and all whom He represented are most surely one family beneath His blessed Headship! What the Lord Jesus has accomplished was achieved for all His people. His righteousness is theirs! His life is theirs! His Resurrection is the pledge of their resurrection! His eternal life is the source and guarantee of their immortal glory

*With Him, their Head, they stand or fall Their life, their surety, and their All.*

Let us think how close we are together, then, for we are in very truth nearer to the saints in Heaven than we are to the ungodly with whom we dwell! We are in one Covenant Headship with just men made perfect, but not with the unregenerate. We are fellow citizens with the glorified, but we are strangers and foreigners among worldlings.

Christ Jesus represented us even as He represented the glorified ones in the old eternity, when the Covenant was signed, and in that hour when the Covenant stipulations were fulfilled upon the bloody tree. And He represents us with the glorified ones, still, as He takes possession of the inheritance in the names of all His elect, and dwells in the Glory which He is preparing for His one Church. It is sweet to remember that all the saints in Heaven and earth have the Covenant promises secured to them by the same Seal. You know the Seal of the Covenantyour eyes delight to dwell upon it, it is the Sacrifice of the bleeding Lamb! And what, my Brothers and Sisters, is the ground of the security of the saints above, but the Covenant of Divine Grace, sealed and ratified by the blood of the Son of God?

We are rejoiced to see that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with the spirits of just men made perfect, the Holy Spirit mentions Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel. The promise and the oath of God those two Immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, are given to all the heirs of promise whether they are militant or triumphant. The Lord has said to them all, I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. Glory be to His name, the blood which is the ground of our hope of Heaven guarantees to the perfected that they shall abide in their bliss! They are there as the redeemed from among men, which we, also, are this day. That same blood which has made white their robes has also cleansed us from all sin!

The family in Heaven and earth, again, will be plainly seen to be one, if you remember that they are all born of the same Father, each one in process of time. Every soul in Heaven has received the new birth, for that which is born of the flesh cannot inherit a spiritual kingdom and, therefore, even babes snatched away from the womb and before yet they had fallen into actual sin, have entered Heaven by regeneration. All there,

whether they lived to old age or died in childhood, have been begotten, again, into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and are born as to their heavenly state, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The nature of all regenerate persons is the same , for in all it is the living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever. The same nature is in the saints above as in the saints below. They are called the sons of God and so are we! They delight in holiness and so, also, do we! They are of the Church of the First-Born and so are we. Their life is the life of God and so is oursimmortality pulses through our spirits as well as through theirs. Not yet, I grant, is the body made immortal, but as to our real life we know who has said, Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Is it not written, You are made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? I know there is no higher nature than the Divine, and this is said to have been bestowed upon the saints below!

The new life in Heaven is more developed and mature. It has also shaken off its dust and has put on its beautiful garments, yet it is the same. In the sinner born to God but yesterday there is a spark of the same fire which burns in the breasts of the glorified above. Christ is in the perfected and the same Christ is in us, for we are, all of one, and He calls us all Brethren. Of the same Father, begotten. Into the same nature born. With the same life quickening us, are we not one family? Oh, it needs but little alteration in the true saint below to make him a saint above! So slight the change that in an instant it is accomplished. Absent from the body and present with the Lord. The work has proceeded so far that it only remains for the Master to give the last touch to it and we shall be meet for Glory and shall enter into the heavenly rest with capacities of joy as suitable for Heaven as the capacities of those who have been there these thousands of years!

We are one, yet further, Brethren, because all saints, whether in Heaven or earth, are partakers in the same Divine love. The Lord knows them that are His, not merely those in Heaven but those below. The poor struggling child of God in poverty is as well known by God as yon bright songster who walks the golden streets! The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. I tell you, timid, trembling woman, humbly resting on your Savior, that you are as truly beloved of God as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who sit down at His table in Glory! The love of God toward His children is not affected by their position, so that He loves those in Heaven better and those on earth less. God forbid!

You, being evil, are not so partial as to bestow all your love upon a son who has prospered in the world and give none of it to another who is bearing the burden of poverty. Our great Father loves the world of His elect with love surpassing thought and has given Himself to each one of them to be the portion of each individual forever. What more can He do for those in Heaven? What less has He done for us? Jesus has engraved the names of all the redeemed upon His hands and heart. He loves them all unto perfection! If, then, they all dwell in the bosom of God as the dearly beloved of His soul, are they not, indeed, one family?

As they all receive the same love so are they all heirs of the same promises and the same blessed inheritance. I am bold to say that as a believer in Christ, Heaven is as much mine as it is Pauls or Peters! They are there to enjoy it and I am waiting to obtain itbut I hold the same title deeds as they do and, as an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ my heritage is as broad and as sure as theirs! Their only right to Heaven lies in the Grace of God which brought them to believe in Jesus. And if we, also, have been brought, by Grace, to believe in Jesus, our title to eternal Glory is the same as theirs!

Oh, child of God, do not think that the Lord has set apart some very choice and special blessings for a few of His peopleall things are yours. The land is before you, even the land which flows with milk and honey, and the whole of it is yours, though you may be less than the least of all saints. The promise is sure to all the seed and all the seed have an interest in it. Remember that blessed passage, If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christnot if full-grown children! Not if welldeveloped children! Not if strong, muscular children, but, if children, and that is all! Regeneration proves you to be heirs, and alike heirs, for there can be no difference in the heirship if they are all heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Will you think of this, you who are little in Israel? You who rank with the Benjamites? Will you sit down and think of this? You are one of the same family as those bright spirits who shine as the stars forever and ever! And their inheritance is also yours, though as yet you have not come of age, and like a minor must wait till you have been trained under tutors and governors and educated for Heaven! You are a prince, though as yet an infant. You are one of the Redeemers kings and priests, as yet uncrowned. You are waiting, waiting, but still secure of the inheritance! You are tarrying till the day breaks and the shadows flee away, but sure that in the morning the crown of life so long reserved will be brought forth and you, also, shall sit with Jesus on His Throne.

So might I continue showing the points in which the saints above and the saints below are akin, but this last must sufficeThey are all members of one bodyand are necessary to the completion of one another. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told, concerning the saints above, that, they, without us, cannot be made perfect. We are the lower limbs, as it were, of the body, but the body must have its inferior as well as its superior members. It cannot be a perfect body should the least part of it be destroyed. Hence it is declared that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He will gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth. The saints above with all their bliss must wait for their resurrection until we, also, shall have come out of great tribulation.

Like ourselves they are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Until all who were predestinated to be conformed to the image of the First-Born shall have been so conformed, the Church cannot be complete. We are linked to the glorified by bonds of indispensable necessity! We think that we cannot do without them, and that is truebut they, also, cannot do without us! As the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ. How closely this brings us together!

Those for whom we sorrow cannot be far away, since we are all the body of Christ and members in particular. If it is dark, my hands know that the head cannot be far off, nor can the foot be far removedeyes, ears, feet, hands, head are all comprised within the limits of one body and so if I cannot see my beloved friend, if I shall not, again, hear her voice on earth, nor see her pleading tears, yet am I sure she is not far away and that the bond between us is by no means snapped, for we are members of our Lords body, of which it is written, not a bone of Him shall be broken.

Thus have I, according to my ability, set forth some of the points of this family union. May the Holy Spirit give us to know them for ourselves.   
II. Let us now speak upon THE INSEPARABLENESS OF THIS UNION. The whole family in Heaven and earth Not the two families nor the divided family, but the whole family in Heaven and earth. It appears at first sight as if we were very effectually divided by the hand of death. Can it be that we are one family when some of us labor on and others sleep beneath the greensward? There was a great truth in the sentence which Wordsworth put into the mouth of the little child when she said, O master, we are seven.   
*But they are dead: those two are dead!   
Their spirits are in Heaven!   
Twas throwing words away, for still   
The little maid would have her will,   
And said No, we are seven.*   
Should we not thus speak of the Divine family, for death, assuredly, has no separating power in the household of God! Like the Apostle, we are persuaded that death cannot separate us from the love of God. The breach caused by the grave is only apparentit is not real, the family is still unitedfor if you think of it, when there is a loss in a family the father is bereaved, but you cannot conceive of our heavenly Fathers being bereaved. Our Father which art in Heaven, You have lost none of Your children! We wept and went to the grave, but You did not, for Your child is not dead! Rather has Your child come closer unto Your bosom to receive a sweeter caress and to know more fully the infinity of Your love!   
When a child is lost from a family, the elder brother is a mourner, for he has lost one of his siblings, but our Elder Brother is not bereaved Jesus has lost none of His! No, has He not, rather, brought home to Himself, His own redeemed? Has He not rejoiced exceedingly to see His good work perfected in one whom He loved? There is no break towards the Father, and no break towards the Elder Brother, and therefore it must be our mistake to fancy that there is any break at all! It cannot be that death divides our Israelwere not the tribes of Reuben and Gad and Manasseh one with the rest of Israel, though the Jordan rolled between?   
It is a whole family, that redeemed household in Heaven and in earth! How little death prevents actual communion it is impossible for us to tell. Some attractive but worthless books have been written pretending to unfold to us the connection between departed spirits and ourselves. But I trust you will not be led into such idle speculations. God has not revealed these things to us and it is not for us to go dreaming about them, for we may dream ourselves into grievous errors if we once indulge our fancies. We know nothing about the commerce of the glorified with earth, but we do know that all departed saints are supremely blessed and that they are with Christ! And if they are with Christ, and we are with Christ, we cannot be far from each other.   
We meet all the saints of every age whenever we meet with God in Christ Jesus. In fellowship with Jesus you are come unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. It is impossible to restrict our communion with the people of God by the bounds of sect, race, country, or time, for we are vitally one with them all! Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us join our hands with those who have gone before, and let us, with equal love, join hands with those below, who before long will be numbered with the same company!   
Death has removed part of the family to an upper room, but we are still one family! There may be two brigades, but we are one army! We may feed in two pastures, but we are one flock! We may dwell awhile in separate habitations, but one homestead will, before long, receive us all. As a matter which grows out of death, it may be well to say that space makes no inroads into the wholeness of the Lords family. So far as spirits are limited to place, there must be a vast distance between the saint in Heaven and the saint on earth. But we ought to remember that space, which seems vast to us, is not vast relatively, either as to God or to spiritual beings. Space is but the house of God, no, God comprehends all space and space, therefore, is but the bosom of the Eternal.   
Space, also, is scarcely to be reckoned when dealing with spiritual beings. We can love and commune with those who are across the Atlantic with as much ease as we can have fellowship with those in the next house. Our friends in Australia, though on the other side of the world, are by no means too distant for our spiritual embrace. Thought flies more swiftly than electricity. Spirits defy space and annihilate distance. And we, in spirit, still meet with the departed in our songs of praise, rejoicing with them in our Lord Jesus Christ! Space does not dividethere are many mansions, but they are all in our Fathers house.   
And, dear Brethren, it is such a great mercy that sin, that greatest of all separators, does not now divide us, for we are made near by the blood of Christ. When we think of those bright spirits before the Throne of God, they seem to be of a superior race to us and we are half tempted to bow at their feet. But this feeling is rebuked in us, as it was in John, by the voice which said, See you do it not! I am of your fellow servants, the Prophets: worship God. They are one with us, after all, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamband that is exactly what we have done, by Gods Grace!   
Beloved in Christ, we are already justified and accepted in the Beloved as much as the glorified. The veil is torn for us as well as for them. The dividing mountains of sin are overturned for us as well as for them. Sinners as we are, we have access to God by the blood of Jesusand with joy we draw near the Throne of God! They have attained to perfection and we are following after. They see the Lord face to face, but we, also, who are pure in heart, have Grace given us to see God. The atoning blood has removed the middle wall and we are one in Christ Jesus.

Neither do errors and failures of understanding divide the family of God. If, indeed, they did, who among us could be of the same family as those who know even as they are known? The little child makes a thousand mistakes and his elder brothers smile, sometimes, but they do not deny that he is their brother because he is so ignorant and childish. Even so, dear Brothers and Sisters, we know very little now. Like the Apostle, we may each one say, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. For now we see through a glass darkly and only know in part, but this does not disprove our kinship with those who see face to face.   
We are of the same school, though on a lower form, and it is written, All your children shall be taught of the Lord. What they know they learned at those same feet at which we also sit. Neither can sorrow separate us. Ah, they know no tears, their griefs and their toils are ended, but we must abide awhile in the stern realities of lifes battle, to wrestle and to suffer. But it is evident that we are not divided from them, for we are all spoken of in one sentence as, These are they that are coming out of great tribulation, for so the translation may run. Those who are already arrived and those who are on the way are described as one company.   
The sick child is of the same family as his brother in perfect health. Soldiers who are enduring the brunt of the battle are of the same army as those who have gained their laurels. To deny that your warring soldier is a part of the host would be a great mistake. To say that he is not of the army because he is in the midst of the conflict would be cruel and false. The saints militant are of the same host as the triumphant! Those who are suffering are of the same company as the beatified. None of these things part uswe are still one family in Christ Jesus. Who shall separate us?   
III. A topic of deep interest now comes before usTHE PRESENT DISPLAY OF THE UNION. We have been speaking of our being one family, but perhaps it appears to you to be only a pleasing theory and, therefore, we will notice certain points in which our unity practically appears. I like to think, first, that the service of those who have departed blends with ours. I do not mean that they can descend to earth to preach and teach and labor. But I do mean this, that they being dead, yet speak. Their service projects itself beyond this life.   
A good man is not dead as to his influential life and real service for God as soon as the breath leaves his body. His work has a momentum in it which makes it roll onhis influence abides. Even in their ashes live their known fires. A very large part of the power which the Holy Spirit gives to the Church is found in the form of influence derived from the testimonies and examples of departed saints. Today the Church of God feels the influence of Paul and Peter. At this very moment the work of the Apostles is telling upon the nations. Is it not certain that the energetic souls of Luther and Calvin have left vital forces behind them which still throb and pulsate?  
Perhaps the Reformers are doing as much today as they did when they were alive! So each man, according to his talent and Grace, leaves behind him not merely his arrow and his bow, his sword and his shield for other hands to usebut the arrows which he shot before he died are still flying through the air and the javelin which he hurled before his hand was paralyzed in death is yet piercing through the bucklers of the foe! The influence of my dear Sister, Mrs. Bartlett, will operate upon some of you as long as you liveand you will transmit it to your successors. You Christians will be the more intense because of her glowing exampleand you sinners will find it the harder to live in sin when you remember her tearful warnings.   
Some of you, I do not doubt, will be her posthumous children, born unto her after she has entered into her rest. Do not let the living think that they are the sole champions in this holy war, for, to all intents and purposes, the spirits of the just made perfect stand side by side with them! And the battle is being carried on, in no small measure, by cannon which they cast and weapons which they forged. Though the builders are absent in body, yet the gold, silver and precious stones which they gave to their Lord will establish forever. Then again, we are one family in Heaven and earth, and that very visibly, because the influence of the prayers of those in Heaven still abides with us.   
Do not misunderstand me, I am no believer in the intercession of the saints above. I believe that they pray, but I believe it to be a damnable error to urge anyone to seek their intercession! What I mean is very different. I mean that prayers offered while they were here and unanswered in their lifetime still remain in the Churchs treasury of prayer. Many a mother dies with her children unsaved, but the prayers she continually offered for them will prevail after her death. Many a minister and many a private member pleads with God for blessing on the Church and, perhaps, does not see it, but prayer must be answeredand 50 years afterwards it is possible that the Church will reap the result of those supplications.   
Is not Scotland, today, the better and the holier for the prayers of John Knox? Is not England the brighter for the prayers of Latimer and Ridley? The august company of the glorified have ceased to kneel with us in person, but in effect they do so! They have gone to other work, but the incense which they kindled when they were below still perfumes the chambers of the Church of God! Further, our unity with them will be seen in this, that their testimony from above blends with ours. The Church is ordained to be a witness. My brethren, we try to witness as God helps us to His Truth as it is in Jesus, even as those who are above once witnessed with us here in life and in death.   
What a sweet witness dying Christians often bear when they cannot speak, in the gleam of the eyes, in the perfect rest of soul which others may well envy, enjoyed just in the moment when pain was most severe and the flesh was failing. But now that these spirits have entered within the veil, do they cease their testimony? No. Hear them. They bear witness to the Lamb, saying, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood. They make known to angels and principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.   
We are engaged with them in revealing the abundant mercy and allsufficiency of the Lord. You are comrades with us, you shining ones! You are fellow witnesses for Jesus and therefore you are one with us! The main employment of saints above is praise. Beloved, what is ours but praise, too? Is it not well put by our poet   
*They sing the Lamb in hymns above,   
And we in songs below?*   
Their music is sweeter than ours, freer from discord and from all that is cold or wandering, but still, the theme is the same and the song springs from the same motiveand is worked in the heart by the same Grace. I think I shall never praise my Lord in Heaven more sincerely than I often praise Him now, when my mouth cannot speak, for the flooding of my souls delight and joy in my God, who has taken me up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock and established my goings, and put a new song into my mouth!   
The deep obligations of every day overwhelm me with indebtedness! I cannot but praise my God, when I think of dire necessities perpetually supplied, multiplied sin continually pardoned, wretched infirmity graciously helped. Yes, we are one family, because when holy worship goes up into the ears of the Eternal, our praise blends with the praise of those who are glorified above, and we are one! Brethren, I believe we are one in some other points as well. Do you not rejoice over sinners? Is it not one of our holidays on earth when the prodigal returns? Verily I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.   
Do you ever cry out against sin and groan because of the power of error in the land? Know you not that the souls under the altar also cry with the same indignation, O Lord, how long! Will You not judge and avenge Your own elect? Do you not expect, each day, the coming of your Lord, and look for it with rapture? They, also, do the same. They say there is no hope in Heaven, but who told them so? The saints, like ourselves, are looking for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Your joy, your desire, your hopeare not these the same as theirs before the Throne of God?   
Towering over all is the fact that The Well-Beloved is the common joy of saints in Heaven and on earth. What makes their Heaven? Who is the Object of all their worship? Who is the Subject of all their songs? In whom do they delight themselves all the day long? Who leads them to living fountains of waters and wipes all tears from their eyes? Beloved, He is as much All in All to us as He is to them! Jesus, we know You and they know You! Jesus, we love You and they love You! Jesus, we embrace You and they embrace You! Jesus, we are oftentimes lost in You, and they are lost in You. Sun of our soul, Life of our life, Light of our delight, You are that to us which You are to them and herein we are all one!  
IV. Last of all, there is to come, before long, A FUTURE MANIFESTATION OF THIS FAMILY UNION, much brighter than anything we have as yet seen. We are one family and we shall meet again! If they cannot come to us we shall go to them, by-and-by. It does not often happen that we carry to the grave one who is known to all this congregation, but seldom does a week pass but what one or other of our number, and frequently two or three, are taken home. I have to look upon you and upon myself as so many shadows. And when I meet you, how often does the question occur to me, Who will go next?

Naturally, I think of some of you who have grown gray in your Masters service and have passed your threescore years and ten. You must go soon, my Brothers and my Sisters. And I know you are not grieved at the prospect. Yet the young as well as the old are taken Home. And men in middle life, with the marrow moist in their bones, are removed, even as those who lean upon their staff for very age. Who knows but what I may leave you soon? My Brother, who knows but that you may be called away? Well, in that blessed day when we leave the earth, we shall perceive that as we are free of the Church below, we are citizens of the Church above!   
Whenever some of us enter an assembly of Believers, they recognize and welcome usthe same reception awaits us above! We shall be quite at home in Heaven when we get there. Some of you have more friends in Heaven than on earth. How few are left of your former friends, compared with the many who have gone above? In the day when you enter into Heaven, you will perceive that the Church is one family, for they will welcome you heartily and recognize in you a Brother and a friend, and so, together with them, you shall adore your Lord!   
Remember there is coming another day in which the family union of the Church will be seen, and that is when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. It may be that we shall all be of the company of those who sleep and, if so, when the trumpet sounds, the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we shall have our share in the first Resurrection. Or, if our Lord should come before we die, we shall be, alive and remain. But we shall undergo a change at the same moment as the dead are raised, so that this corruptible shall put on incorruption! What a family we shall be when we all rise together and all the changed ones stand with us, all of one race, all regenerate, all clothed in the white robe of Jesus righteousness! What a family! What a meeting it will be!   
*How loud shall our glad voices sing,   
When Christ, His risen saints shall bring   
From beds of dust, and silent clay,   
To realms of everlasting day.*   
Beloved, I cannot dwell upon what Glory will follow on earth, but if our Lord shall live and reign on earth a thousand years, and if there shall be set up a great empire which shall outshine all other monarchies as much as the sun outshines the stars, we shall all share in it, for He will make us all kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with Him upon the earth. Then, when comes the end, and He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be All in All, we shall forever be with the Lord.   
My soul anticipates that grandest of all family meetings, when all the chosen shall assemble around the Throne of God. It is but a little while and it shall come. It is but the twinkling of an eye and it shall all be matter of fact. We talk of time as though it were a far reaching thing. I appeal to you gray heads who know what 70 years meanare they not gone as a watch in the night? Well, let the waiting be prolonged for 10,000 years, if the Lord pleases! The 10,000 years will end and then forever and forever we shall be as one family where Jesus is! This hope should cheer us. Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory? Cheered by the prospect of an everlasting reunion, we defy you to sadden us! Encouraged by the Glory which God has decreed, we laugh at your vain attempts to make breaches in the ranks of the one and indivisible family of the living God!   
The practical point isDo we belong to that family? I will leave that naked question to work in every heart. Do I belong to that family? Am I born of God? Am I a believer in Jesus? If not, I am an heir of wrath and not in the family of God. If we do belong to the family, let us show our relationship by loving all the members of it. I should not like a Brother to be gone to Heaven and to reflect that I was unkind to him. I should not like to think that I might have smoothed his pathway but I did not. Or I might have cheered him and refused.   
Dear Brothers and Sisters, we shall live together in Heaven forever! Let us love each other fervently, now, with a pure heart. Help your poor Brothers and Sisters, cheer your desponding Brothers and Sisters. Let no man look only on his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others. Brother, be brotherly! Sister, be a true sister. Let us not love in word, only, but in deed and in truth, for we shall soon be at home together in our Fathers house on high.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONRevelation 7.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK872, 832, 859.  
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HEAVENLY GEOMETRY

NO. 707

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**That He would grant you, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with**

**all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:16-19.**

THIS Divine measurement is an art of the most desirable kind, as appears from its being the object of most earnest Apostolic prayers. Paul was not content to travail in birth for souls and to become their spiritual parentbut he afterwards exercised the functions of a nursing father, tenderly caring for the souls to whom he had been blessedand desiring to see them growing up in the faith to the ripeness of spiritual maturity. He was parent, nurse, and tutorin fact he became all things, as far as lay within his powerto his spiritual children.

Pauls wise tenderness leads us to an assured confidence that the blessing to pray for, which he suspended his writing of so important an Epistle, must have been of the very highest value. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He felt that it was desirable to the very last degree that the saints should not only know themselves to be the objects of Divine favor, but should be well acquainted with its sublime qualities and perfections which he here compares to a fourfold measurement.

In this measurement may you and I be skilled. If we know nothing of mathematics, may we be well-tutored scholars in this spiritual geometry and be able to comprehend the breadths and lengths of Jesus precious love. It may be well at the outset to call your attention to the previous education which the Apostle desires for the saints as a preliminary to their measurement of Divine love. Then the measurement itself which he desires them to practice. And lastly, the practical results which would be sure to follow from their being able to comprehend the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. Like a wise and enlightened teacher, Paul desires for the saints that they should receive THAT PREVIOUS EDUCATION WHICH IS NECESSARY BEFORE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER UPON SUCH A SCIENCE AS THE MEASUREMENT OF CHRISTS LOVE. When lads go to school they are not at first put to study algebra, nor are they sent out to make a trigonometrical survey of a county. The schoolmaster knows that they must have a rudimentary knowledge of arithmetic, or else to teach them algebra would be a waste of time, and that they must have some acquaintance with common geometry, or it would be absurd to instruct them in surveying.

He therefore begins with the elementary information, and when they have learned simpler matters they are ready for the more difficult studies. They climb the steps of the door of science and then they are introduced to her temple. The Apostle Paul does not propose that the new convert should at once be able to measure the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ! He knows that this is not within the range of his infant mind, for the new-born spirit has a time of growth to go through before it can enter into the deep things of God. We must learn our alphabet at the dames school of repentance and faith, and study the syntax of Christian holiness at the grammar school of experience before we can enter the university of full assurance and obtain a fellowship among those who comprehend the science of Christ Crucified in its highest degree.

It is not for the mere babe to compute distances or to fathom depths this is work for men! The child will think as a child and understand as a child until instruction and years have developed his powers and fitted him for more sublime and manly thought. If you will kindly refer to the text you will see what this previous education is which the Apostle desired for the saints. It is very fully described in three parts. First, He desired that their spiritual faculties might be strengthened, for he prays that they might be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. He does not so much intend that they may be strengthened in their mental faculties as in their spiritual capacities, to which he refers by the term, inner man.

The schoolmaster knows that the boys mind must be strengthened, that his understanding must be exercised, his discernment must be developed, and his memory must be rendered capacious before he may enter upon superior studies. And the Apostle knows that our spiritual faculties must undergo the same kind of development. Our faith, for instance, must be unwavering. Our love must become fervent. Our hope must be bright. Our joy must be increased, and then, but not till then, we shall be able to comprehend the length and breadth of Divine love. We are to be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of Godand who can strengthen as He strengthens? When the Divine Omnipotence pours its renewing energy into our poor fainting weakness, then we grow strong, indeed!

When the Divine Intelligence enlightens our pitiful ignorance, then we grow truly wise. When the Divine Infinity enlarges and expands our narrow capacities to receive the Truth of God, then are we blessedly elevated to otherwise unattainable points of blissful knowledge. Oh the blessedness of being strengthened of the Holy Spirit! How spiritually strong do we become when He infuses His might into us! But the Spirit of God works by

means, and therefore we may expect to have our spiritual faculties strengthened by the study of the Word, by communion with Christ, by listening to the earnest exhortations of our Brethren, by experience, by prayer, and by all other hallowed exertions which Divine Grace has ordained to be the channels of communication between the heirs of the kingdom and the Comforter who abides with them forever.

Our strength to learn with must come from God the Holy Spirit. I suppose the expression, strengthened with might, is meant to refer to an eminent measure of strength. The Christian man will get to Heaven should he have only strength as a grain of mustard seed. Through many difficulties the work of faith, though almost water-logged, will be tugged into the harbor, for Christ is on board and secures her safety! But it is not desirable that we should thus struggle into eternal life. It is far more to be hoped that our young faculties may come to healthy and vigorous manhood so that, to return to our former metaphor, our vesselstaunch and in good trim, with her sails well filled, and her flags flying right gallantly, having overcome every stormmay have an abundant entrance into the desired haven.

Brethren, I trust you are not among those who think it quite enough to be barely alive unto God. I trust that you wish to be not only babes in the family, but young men and fathers in the household, and that you aspire to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit with might that you may become powerful menmen able to enter into the soul and marrow of Divine things, and to discern between things that differ. I would have you not mere milk-fed infants, but men able to crack the nuts of the Gospel and to digest the strong meat, because by reason of years you have had all your senses exercised.

Why should we forever be obliged to lay again the foundations? Why not press onward and upward in heavenly attainments as men do in human learning? Why must our heads always wear the dunces cap and our backs smart with the fools rod? The Holy Spirit works in us to this very end that we may be no more mere children, but well-taught men of God! Oh grieve Him not, but be willing to be taught! This was the object of the Apostles prayers and of our loving anxieties. Remember, Beloved, that none of you will be able to comprehend the measurement of the love of Christ unless first of all the Holy Spirit, our Instructor, shall have baptized your spiritual powers with His sacred influences. Then you will be strengthened with might in that refined and newly created part of your being which is called the inner man, because it is your truest, most precious, most secret, most vital, most essential self.

A second part of this preliminary education is mentioned by our Apostle in the next sentenceThat Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. He desires that the Object of study may be evermore before them. A good tutor not only wishes his scholar may have a disciplined mind able to grapple with the subject, but he endeavors to keep the subject always before him. In order to attain to any proficiency in a science, the mind must be abstracted from all other thoughts and continually exercised with the chosen theme. You will never find a man preeminent in astronomy unless astronomy has become the lord of his mind and holds a sway over his mind even in his dreams. The anatomist must be bound to nerves, and bones, and blood vesselsas the galley slave is bound to the oaror he will never master his subject.

The botanist must be enamored of every flower, and wedded to every plant, or the fields will utterly baffle him. Through desire, a man having separated himself, seeks and intermeddles with all wisdom. Solomon knew what he wrote when he said, separated himself, for without separation or abstraction there can be no progress. Now, the Apostle desires that we who are Believers, our faculties being strengthened, may have the Person of Jesus constantly before us to inflame our love, and so increase our knowledge. See how near he would have Jesus be! That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. You cannot get a subject closer to you than to have it on the inner side of the eyesthat is to say, in the heart itself.

The astronomer cannot always see the stars because they are far away, and outside of him. But our Star shines in the Heaven of our hearts ever more. The botanist must find his flowers in their seasons, but our Plant of renown blooms in our souls all the year round! We carry the instruments of our saintly art, and the Object of our devout contemplation within ourselves! As a scholar carries in his pocket a small edition of his favorite classic, so do we carry Christ in our hearts. What if I say we bear about with us a heart edition of the Libra Crucis, the Book of the Cross? Renewed hearts need no other library than themselves, for Jesus, in our inmost spirits, is library enough! If we knew more fully by experience the meaning of, Christ in you the hope of glory, our Heaven-taught affections, which are the best part of our inner man, might be continually exercised upon the Person, the work, and the love of our dear Redeemer. That Christ may dwell in your hearts.

Brothers and Sisters, it will be to small profit that we shall talk to you about the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ unless there is in your soul a devout longing ambition to set the Lord Jesus always before you, as the frequent, if not the constant Subject of your meditation! No progress to any extent is to be made in the school of the Cross unless you separate yourself and give yourself wholly to this. It must be the one great business of your life, to know Him and the power of His Resurrection. I would to God that we were all entered as diligent scholars in Jesus collegestudents of Corpus Christi, or the Body of Christresolved to attain unto a good degree in the learning of the Cross, a learning which angels desire to understand!

But to do this the heart must be full of Jesus, welling up with His love, flaming with it, overrunning with it! And therefore the Apostle prays, that Christ may dwell in your hearts. Observe the words, that He may dwellnot that He may call upon you sometimes, as a casual visitor enters into a house and tarries for a nightbut that He may dwell. That Christ may take up His abode in your hearts. That the Lord Jesus may become the Lord and tenant of your inmost being, never more to go out, but to dwell there, world without end. Observe, too, the words that He may dwell in your heartsthat best room of the house of manhoodnot in your thoughts alone, but in your affections! Not merely have Him in your minds, but have Him in your loves.

Paul wants you to have a love to Christ of a most abiding character. Not a love that flames up under an earnest sermon and then dies out into the darkness of a few embers, but a constant flamethe abiding of Jesus love in your hearts, both day and nightlike the flame upon the altar which never went out. This cannot be accomplished except by faith. Faith must be strong, or love will not be fervent. The root of the flower must be healthy or we cannot expect the bloom to be sweet. Faith is the lilys root, and love is the lilys bloom. Now Jesus cannot be in your hearts love except you have a firm hold of Him by your hearts faith. Therefore Paul prays that you may always trust Christ, that you may always love Him. Thus, Brethren, the Lord Jesus, being constantly brought under your hearts attention, you are likely to be able to comprehend the measurement of His love which would otherwise be impossible for you to do.

The Apostle prays further that they may have practical exercise in the art of holy lovethat you, being rooted and grounded in love. Every experienced tutor knows that it is greatly helpful to the student to exercise him in his chosen pursuit upon some lower and inferior branch of it, so as to lead him gradually to the higher points of it. If, for instance, he means him to understand the surveying of estates, he bids him measure a field containing an acre or two. If he means him to map out a country, he sets him first to make a plan of a neighboring field or a farm.

The Apostle acts upon the same method. That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend the breadth and length of the love of Christ. Having the love of Jesus in youpossessed with love to Christyou will be practiced in the exercise of love and so will understand the love which filled the Savior. You will learn to do business upon the greater waters of the Redeemers infinite love to His people as you sail upon the stream of your love to Him. Two expressions are usedrooted, like a living tree which lays hold upon the soil twists itself round the rocks, and cannot be upturned. Grounded, like a building which has been settled, as a whole, and will never show any cracks or flaws in the future through failures in the foundation.

The Apostle wishes us to be rooted and grounded in love, a vital union being established between our souls and Jesus, so that we love Him because He first loved us. And also a fiduciary union, or a union of trust by which we rest upon Jesus as the stones of a wall are settled upon the foundation. He would have us, by love and by faith, to be knit to Christ, and to be firm, and fast, and fixed, and immovable in our loving attachment to Him. My dear Brothers and Sisters, you cannot know Christs love to you, to any great extent, except you thus love Him. You must love, or you cannot comprehend love. A man who has never felt benevolence towards his fellow creaturesand there are some such monsterssneers and laughs at those who can give their money to the poor or to the sick. He thinks such persons fools at least, if not absolutely mad.

Ah, said one, I know how to make money, and then he added significantly, clenching his fist, and I know what some people do not know I know how to take care of it, too. There are some benevolent people who do not know how to take care of it in

that sense, but they know how to do good with it! And such people will never be comprehended by the mean money-grubbing wretch who pollutes the earth he lives upon. As though he were a very Solomon, and benevolent men were idiots, he mutters conceitedly, Well, I cannot understand it. It is stupidity to give away your hard-earned money. Of course it is to him! He cannot comprehend it, and so the love of Jesus Christ cannot be comprehended by a man who does not love.

If you have no love to souls, you will not understand why Jesus wept over Jerusalem. It will puzzle you mightily! You will look to Matthew Henry, and Scott, and Gill, and be more puzzled still. But if you love the souls of men you will find no difficulty in the passage at all, for you will weep over sinners, too. If you do not love the saints, you will wonder how Jesus can love them. But when you have once felt an unselfish Christ-like love to your fellow men, the riddle will be answered. He who circumnavigated the world began by sailing upon brooks and mill ponds. And he who would measure the breadths and lengths of Jesus love must feel his own soul filled with affection for his Lord.

Paul would have us, then, with developed facultieswith the Subject in our hearts, and with an exercise of love on our partprepared to enter upon the science. My Brethren, when I consider what a science it isthe science of the love of Christthe most masterly of all knowledge, too deep for the archangels intellect, the wonder of all the hosts of Heaven! When I consider that the greatest human minds have confessed themselves to be altogether lost in the contemplation, and have had to say, Oh the depths! Oh the depths! I do not wonder at all that the Apostle, instead of praying for us that we might immediately enter upon the study of it, first prays that we may be gratified to learn it. As some sciences, if taught to an illiterate man would be only taught in their letter, and could not be learned in their spirit for want of capacity to receive them, so the love of Jesus Christ in its length, and breadth, and depth, and heightif it could be taught in the letter of it to an untrained Believerwould be, in a great measure, lost upon him.

He would not be deriving true knowledge from it. He would observe the letter, but the inward spirit he would not be able to understand. Beloved, if you are to win the precious attainment of the knowledge of Christs love in its depth and breadth, you must pray that God would strengthen your spiritual powers. You must plead that Jesus may abide in your souls and that your love to Him may become vigorous and all-absorbing! For only then can you drink deeply into the unutterable and infinite love of Jesus!

II. We now come to consider more closely the SCIENCE OF HEAVENLY MEASUREMENT ITSELF. According to the text we have a solid body to deal with, for we are to measure its breadth and length, and depth, and height. This cubical measurementfor it lies foursquare, like the new Jerusalemproves the reality of the body to be measured.

Alas, to a great many religious people the love of Jesus is not a solid substantial thing at allit is a beautiful fiction, a sentimental belief, a formal theorybut to Paul it was a real, substantial, measurable fact. He had considered it this way, and that way, and the other way. And it was evidently real to him, whatever it might be to others. No one knows the love of Christ at all if he does not know it to be real, and no one has felt it in his soul at all unless it becomes so real as to constrain him and move him into actual activity.

We have a word which we sometimes use in a sense which I believe is not correct according to the dictionary. I mean the word realize. That word has been forced into the language of Christian experience, and can never be forced out again. We must realize, or make real to our hearts the love of Christ. That is just what I think the Apostle didhe made real to himself the love of his Master and Lord. It was not to him a surface theory, which might have breadth, but could not have depthor a mere narrow statement with length, but no breadth! It was a thing as firm and solid as anything in the world.

It is true the love of Jesus is not material and earthly so as to be seen and handled, but it is even more substantial than if it were a thing to be seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal. To the carnal man the visible is real, and the invisible a mere dream. But to the spiritual man things are reversedthe visible is the shadow and the invisible the substance! May you be such men, dear Friends, all of you! The Apostle desires that when the love of Christ becomes to us a solid reality we may have close communion with it. You may measure the breadth and length of a thing at a great distance, but you cannot very well measure its depth without drawing near to it.

What a holy familiarity with Jesus do the words imply when we come to measurements of all kinds! What condescension is this which allows the sacred heart to be fathomed like a sea, and to be measured as a field! Shall the Infinite thus bow itself to man? Shall man refuse to commune with such condescending love? Should it not be our deep desire to obtain and to retain the most intimate acquaintance with the thrice-blessed love of Jesus, so as not only to measure it in one form, but in all forms? That in every way in which the love of Christ may be regarded, from above or from below, we may be well acquainted with it.

We should know the inmost secrets of the Redeemers love! Its doings and sacrifices which are the apparent part of itits breadth, its counsels and its plans. Its depththe secret part of it. Its lengthits endurance and patience. Its heightits triumphs and glories. We would know all that is knowable, for when we know all that has been learned by mortals, there is still something that is beyond our view, and hence the Apostle adds, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.

Let me come to the very words of our text, and point out to you their order. The first object of the Christians knowledge should be the breadth of the Saviors love. I know a certain school of Christians who have need to study this point, for they have a very narrow idea of the Lords loving kindness. They cannot be brought by any means to conceive of it as being broadto them it is no wider than a razors edge. They conceive of Divine love as a very narrow stream. They have never seen it to be a mighty, flowing, abounding, and rejoicing river such as it really is. The breadth of Christs love, dear Friends, we are told in Scripture, is such that it extends to all ranks and races of mankindnot to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile.

The love of Jesus Christ does not surround our favored island alone, but like the ocean, it washes every shore. The love of Jesus Christ has been extended to kings upon their thrones, but with equal and more frequent bounty to the slaves in their dungeons. In some respects the love of Jesus comes to every man, for there is not a man or woman born who does not owe something to the benevolence of God through the love of Jesus. The respite which keeps the sinner out of Hell is no doubt the result of that love which said, Spare it yet a little longer, till I dig about it and fertilize it, and if it brings forth fruit, well.

Beloved, the benevolent love of Jesus is more extended than the lines of His electing love, for we hear Him saying, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the Prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen does gather her brood under her wings, and you would not. That is not the love which beams resplendently upon His chosen, but it is true love for all that pitying and benevolent love which revealed itself in honest tears of grief. I would not have you omit this view of the subject when you are measuring its breadth, although we still feel that in its utmost depth and fullness that love flows only to His people.

Beloved, consider the breadth of special love. We are very apt to conceive the number of Gods elect to be but few. Who told us that? When the Savior was asked, Lord, are there few that shall be saved? He never answered that question, but He said, Strive to enter into the strait gate, as though He had said, Whether there are many or not, you strive to the utmost to enter in. I hope that the multitude of the chosen will far exceed the number of the lost. It has always seemed to me that if in all things Christ will have the pre-eminence, He will not suffer the powers of darkness to drag away the major part of the human race.

On the contrary, a multitude that no man can numberso many as the stars in Heaven for multitude, and like the sands upon the seashore are innumerableshall be the fruit of His suffering which shall make Him to see of the travail of His soul and to be satisfied. It is well to have as broad ideas of the love of Christ as Scripture will permit us, and there I trust we shall be content to stay. But, Brethren, we get the best idea of the breadth of Christs love when we behold it flowing to our lost and guilty selves! I never thought it so broad a stream till I found that it reached to me, even to me! I feared that I was far away from its blessed margin, but the river swelled and overflowed its banks until at last it washed me, even me!

How broad it must have been to have reached to some here present who had wandered into the plains of sin, and had followed after their own wanton devices, and yet the breadth of the river embraced even them. You may measure the breadth of it by the sins which it covers. When a river is overflowing, you tell how broad it must be by the little hillocks and the treetops, which you can see in it. You may see how broad is the love of Christ, that it reaches to such offenses as theseit reaches to theft, to drunkenness, to blasphemy, to fornication, to adultery, to murder. The Saviors measurement of it is this, All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.

There is a boundary. It stops at one sin which is unto death, but of that we know nothing and I trust we never may! With that one exception, broad as sin is, so broad is this mighty love of Christ which covers it all. Do you not think, however, that we, most of us, fail to see the breadth of Christs love in matters of Providence? You know what is meant by the breadth of a mans mind, the breadth of his thoughts when he can consider a great many subjects at oncewhen he has the ability to accomplish many designs and many purposes with one stroke. Now, the breadth of the Saviors love is just thisthere is no part of His peoples interests which He does not consider. And there is nothing which concerns their welfare which is not important to Him.

Not merely does He think of you, Believer, as an immortal being, but as a mortal being, too. Do not deny it or doubt itthe very hairs of your head are all numbered! There is nothing that concerns His elect that is unimportant to our Lord. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. It were a sad thing for us if this river of love did not cover all our concerns, for what mischief might be worked for us in that part of our business which did not come under our gracious Lords inspection. Oh, Believer, rest assured that the heart of Jesus concerns itself about your meaner affairs! Your buying and selling He cares for. Your counter and counting-house, your ships and your carts and your horses, and your barley, and your wheat, and your hay, and your strawyour children, your little ones, and everything which concerns you concerns Him, also.

The breadth of His tender love is such that you may go to Him in all mattersfor in all your afflictions He is afflictedand like as a father pities his children, so does He pity you. This invites us to look at the breadth of the Saviors love under a still greater aspect. All the concerns of all His saints that have ever lived or ever shall live, are all borne upon the broad bosom of the Son of God! Oh what a heart His is, that does not merely comprehend the persons of His people, but comprehends the diverge and innumerable concerns of all those persons! Alexander, it is said, knew the names of his soldiers, but Alexander could not think of every soldier in every tent, and of all the business of every soldier. But this the love of Christ doesHe thinks of all the cares and all the troubles and all the joys present and to come of every blood-bought one.

Now see, dear Friend, if you can measure the breadth of the love of Christ! You have a task before you which you will not yet accomplish, and if you could, there would still remain another breadth, namely, that breadth measured by the gifts which He brings. Think of what He has brought you! He has brought you justification! Yes, adoption, sanctification, eternal life! The riches of His goodness are unsearchable. You shall never be able to tell them out or even conceive them. Oh the breadth of the love of Christ! And yet you see this is merely a beginning because the breadth and measurement is but surface work. This is for you youngsters to think about, but yet I wish some of the elder Christians would, too.

Some of them seem to be so taken up with the height and length that they deny the breadth, and you would think from hearing them preach that Christ came into the world to save half-a-dozen, and that they were five of themat least that nobody else could go to Heaven except such as they were who swore by their Shibboleth and agreed in every jot and tittle with their creed. Away with their narrowness! There will be more in Heaven than we expect to see there by a long wayand there will be some there with whom we had very little comfortable fellowship on earthwho had fellowship with Christ, and who are therefore taken to dwell with Him forever.

The next object of study is the length of Christs love. It has been well observed that if Christ had thought upon His people for ten minutes it would have been a wonderful condescension. In fact it would have been a thing to sing of in Heaven that Christ Jesus did once think upon us, because we are not worthy of a minute of Gods thoughts. Now just try, if you can, to grasp the thought. He has thought upon His people as long as He has existed! Is it not eternal love, and what is longer than that? I have loved you with an everlasting love. As long, then, with Deity itself is the love of Deity towards its chosen ones!

God did love us in His Son long before the world began. If an angel were to start from today with the design of finding out when Gods love began, he would doubtless fly on till he lingered at the Cross. Here, he would say, here is the fountain, here is the source of it all. But he would be reminded that, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Then there was a love before the giving of His Son. He would fly onward till he paused at Isaiahs day and heard of Gods love in the prophecy that the Son of man should bear the iniquity of His people. He would say, Surely it begins here! But saints would remind him of yet older words of comfort, and he would fly on till he stopped outside of the garden of Eden and heard the Lord say, The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpents head.

Surely, he would say, it began here. But divinely instructed he would go back yet further, even to the eternal councils where first of all salvation was planned and contrived in the cabinets of Wisdom before the world was. He would have to go back, back, back, till creation had vanishedtill there remained not a shred of existence except the absolute self-existent Deityand then in the Eternal Mind he would see thoughts of love toward a people to be formed for Himself. This knowledge of the length of love does not always come to Christians early in their history. Some of my dear Brethren know the breadth of Christs love right well, but they seem as if they never would learn its length.

Some of our Arminian friends know a great deal about the breadth of it, and can preach very sweetly upon it, too. And I thank God they can, for they are the means of bringing in many converts who might not be brought in if it were not for their broad preaching. Yes, dear Brothers and Sisters, it may be as broad as you like, but it must be long, too. You must not preach a love that begins when you begin, but a love which is before youa causeless love which is the cause and not the effect of your lovea love which knows no beginning, but is ancient as the throne of Deity.

This love is not only without beginning but it is without pause. There is never a moment when Jesus ceases to love His people. The love of Jesus knows nothing of suspended animation. There are some rivers in Australia which lose themselves, and for miles along their bed you find nothing but dry stones at certain seasons of the year. It is never so with the love of Christit is long, and without a break from beginning to endit is a chain without a single broken or feeble link. The love of Jesus possesses an eternal existence in which there is not a single intermission, nor even a sign of failure or hint of an end. Here let us rejoice without trembling. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.

We lean our heads upon this pillow and we sleep right sweetly there He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He said, I am God, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. There are no ifs and buts in this circle of Divine Grace! All is as certain as the Throne of God. Our conquering Captain shall bring many sons to Glory, and His shall be the praise.

Dear Friends, we studiously consider the length of this love of Christ, but I am persuaded, study it as we may, we shall never completely grasp it. It is so long that your old age cannot wear it out. So long that your continual tribulations cannot exhaust it. Your successive temptations shall not drain it drylike eternity itself it knows no bounds.

My time has fled and I am only in the middle of my subject! Therefore the rest of the discourse must be in brief hints and hurried sentences. The depth of the love of Jesus! Consider it as stooping to look upon such an insignificant creature as man! View the depth of that love in receiving such sinful creatures into His embrace! What a depth is seen when the Lord Jesus Christ selects some guilty wretch who has openly broken the laws of his country and subjected himself to punishment from his fellowmen, and yet the Lord Jesus freely pardons him when he repents of sin, and receives Him into his hearts love!

The depth of this river of love is best seen, however, in the fact that Jesus became a Man. Deity became Incarnate! The Lord of angels slept upon a womans breast! Nor is this all. Being a Man, He bears our sorrows, goes through the world weary, and poor, and patient. A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Nor is this allHe bears our sins. The iniquities of His people, like a huge load, are laid upon His shoulders, and He stands as their Substitute. Even yet it is not enough, for He bears our punishment, and on the bloody tree He bows His head, and is obedient even unto death. Hells waves rolled over Him. The eternal wrath of God spent itself upon His blessed head! He was made lower than the angels, but He stooped lower still, till He called himself a worm and no man!

Oh the depth of the agony of Jesus smarting for sin! O Sinner! You cannot have gone too deep for Christs love to reach you. O Backslider! You cannot have sinned too foully for forgiveness! You who have gone beyond conception in sinyou who have practiced the foulest and most devilish of sinsthe depth of Christs love is still deeper, and He is able to save even to the uttermost!

Think next of the height of the Masters love. You see it is put last, as the highest point of learning. There are some who have advanced as far as to understand somewhat of the depths who do not know the full dignity and glory of an heir of Heaven, and have felt but little of the power of His ascension. Why, the love of Jesus, even in this present life, is a height unspeakable, for has it not lifted us up to become sons of God? And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. It has given us an earnest of the inheritance! It has made us anticipate the hour when we shall dwell with the angels of light! It tells us that our conversation is in Heaven, and that our life is hid with Christ in God!

Yet, Brethren, the height of this love will be best seen in a future state. You shall be borne up to dwell with Christ in the clouds when the world is in a blaze, and when the judgment is passed you shall be carried by angels wings up to the seventh Heaven where God dwells! Oh the breadth, the length, the depth, the height! To sum up what we have said in four wordsfor breadth the love of Jesus is immensity, for length it is eternity, for depth it is immeasurabilityand for height it is infinity. O Christian,may the Holy Spirit instruct you in these great things!

III. Lastly, two or three words. If it shall be our privilege to study this science and to master it, it will still be over and above us, for it passes all knowledge. But there will flow the following PRACTICAL RESULTS. We shall be filled with all the fullness of God. Brethren, do try and get hold of this marvelous expression when you are alone in meditation. Set it before you as a great mystery to be dived into. Filled with all the fullness of God. What can it mean?

Is it to have God within you? God dwelling in your inmost spirit? It is this, but more! Filled with Godto hold as much of God as your nature can holdwhat a thought! Filled with God, even this is not all. Filled with the fullness of God. The fullness of His love and Grace, and power, and holiness can come to dwell in you! But this, even, is not all that the verse speaks of! It is written, filled with all the fullness of God. What a transcendent expression! Here we have not only an indwelling God, but that God in the utmost fullness of His Godhead filling and overflowing the whole soul with His fullness!

I cannot help borrowing an illustration from a friend who took up a bottle by the seashore, filled it full of seawater, corked it down, and then threw it into the sea. Now, he said, there it is, there is the sea in the bottle, and there is the bottle in the sea. It is full to fullness, and then, in a still greater fullness. There is my soul with God in it, and my soul in God! The fullness of God in me as much as I can hold, and then myself in the fullness of God. The illustration gives one as much of the text as one knows how to conveyourselves swallowed up in the all-absorbing abyss of the love of Godand that same love of God flowing into all the parts and powers of our soul till we are as full of God as man can hold! Then shall we show that love in our lives, in our prayers, in our preaching, in everything that we do. We shall manifest not only that we have been with Jesus, but that we have Jesus dwelling in us, filling us right full with His loving, sanctifying, elevating Presence.

Beloved, if we shall reach the point indicated in the text, we shall then begin to imitate the love of God in its four aspects. I am sure if we shall ever learn the breadth of Christs love our love will grow broadwe shall no longer confine our love to our own churchbut shall care for all the churches of God. We shall feel an affection not only for Christians of our own name, but to Christians of all names. Then our love will gain length also. We shall love Christ so that we cannot leave off loving Him. We shall persevere in love, we shall abide in His love as He abides in it. We shall constantly have the flame of our love going up to Heaven.

And then our love will acquire depth. We shall be humbled on account of our own sinfulness. We shall sink lower and lower in our own esteem, and our love will become deeper and more grounded as it descends more fully into the core of our nature. And then love will climb the heights. We shall forget the world and the cares of it. We shall become Christians who lie no longer among the pots, but who have received the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. We shall attain to such a height in our love, that we shall scale the mountaintops of the promises, and with our foreheads bathed in the sunlight shall look down upon the world that still lies in darkness, and rejoice that we are made heirs of light!

Our love mounting to Heaven shall there be in its height as we appear before the Great White Throne and cast our crowns with many a song before Him who loved us with a breadth, and length, and depth, and height of love that even in Heaven shall surpass all measurement. God bless you, dear Friends, with this love, for Christs sake. Amen.

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THE TOP OF THE LADDER   
NO. 1755

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And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:19.

THIS is a part of Pauls prayer for the Ephesian believers. It is the closing clause and consummation of it. It mentions the grandest gift for which he prayed. His prayer was like that ladder which Jacob saw, the top of which reached to Heaven and Godand the Apostle at the foot of it was not asleepbut looking up with eager eyes and marking each rising rung of light. Be it ours by sweet experience to ascend that staircase of light! May the Holy Spirit reveal it to us even now! You must begin to read at the 14th verseFor this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, thatthis is one rung of the ladder. That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, thathere comes the second rungone step helps you to reach the next and you are strengthened that you may rise higher and enjoy a further privilege!

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, thatthis is the third rung. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may help you at once take a firm footing upon it! That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. Surely we are at the top of the ladder now, are we not? What a height! How glorious is the view! How solid the standing! How exhilarating the sense of communion with all saints and with the Lord of saints! Yet this is not the top of it! Here is another stepthat you might be filled with all the fullness of God. You see that the prayer begins with the gracious petition that we may be strengthenedstrengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, according to the riches of His glory.

The objective is that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Before the Lord can dwell in us, we must be strengthenedmentally and spiritually strengthened. To entertain the High and Holy Oneto receive into our soul the indwelling Christit is necessary that the temple be strengthened, that there be more power put into every pillar and into every stone of the edifice. It is taken for granted that we have already been washed and cleansed and so made fit for Christ to come and dwell within us. But we also need to be strengthened, for, unless we become stronger in all spiritual life, how is Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith? Unless we become stronger in love and in all the Graces of the Spirit, how can we worthily entertain such a Guest as the Lord Jesus?

Yes, and we even need that our spiritual perception should be strengthened, that we may be able to know Him when He does come and dwell in us. We need that our spirit should be elevated and lifted into a higher condition than as yet it has known in order that we may be on a platform where we can have communion with Christ and may, by a heavenly enlargement of mind and heart, be made able, to the fullest, to entertain the Lord of Glory! We must be strengthened into stability of mind, that so Christ may dwell, abide, reside in our hearts by faith. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, everything has to be done for us, for even when we are made clean enough for Christ to enter us, we are not strong enough! Even when the Lord has taken away the defilement so that sin no longer lies at the door to shut Him out, yet even then we are too feeble to entertain so great a Guest!

We should be like Peter, who, when Christ came into his boat and filled it with fish, was too feeble to receive Him and, therefore, cried out in an agony of weakness, Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Oh, says one, I would never say that. I do not know, Brother. If the Lord were to favor you with such Divine manifestations as He has given to the stronger saints, you might be overcome and swoon with inward faintness, almost desiring that Christ would not draw so near to you. If the Lord should appear to you in His Glory, you would be afraid and, like John in the Apocalypse, fall at His feet as dead. You need to be strengthened, for how else could you endure the vision of His splendor or the divine excitement of His infinite love?

Paul, therefore, begins his requests for the Ephesians with a prayer for more strength for their inner man. Let us pray it tonightO Holy Spirit, strengthen my feeble mind that I may be able to receive more of my Lord! Give me more capacity; give me a clearer perception; give me a better memory; give me an intense affection; give me a larger faith. This is the first prayer that you may be strengthened according to the riches of His Glory with might, by His Spirit, in the inner man. Be eager for this! Plead now with all your hearts for me and for yourselves, that we may

all be strengthened by the power of the Spirit of our God!

Now, having stood on the first step of the ladder, Paul goes on to pray that when we are strengthened, we may be inhabitedthat Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. When the house is ready to receive Him and strong enough for such a wondrous Inhabitant, may Jesus come, not to look about Him as He did when He went into the Templefor we read that He looked round about Him with indignation and did not remain there but may He come on purpose to abide with us! May He come, not to tarry for a night and give us some transient visits of His love, sweet as that would be, but, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith.

This will make you living temples for the indwelling Lord! Oh, but this is a great prayer! And when you are strengthened to receive so sacred a Gift, may the Lord fulfill it to you till your communion with Christ shall be constant all the while you are awake! And when you awake in the night, may you still be with Him, being even now, forever with the Lord. I pray that you may no longer envy the disciples in their walk to Emmaus, as though they were the most privileged of all mankind because they had one walk with Jesusbut may your fellowship be such that you entertain the Savior day and night! Going, may you take Him where you go. And staying, find Him where you stay. May you have His perpetual, unclouded Presence with you, being strengthened up to that mark, for it is not every man that is capable of it.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, you must aspire to the power of Grace at its fullest! Pray to be strengthened by the Spirit of God until Christ shall reside in your hearts by faith! Pray that you may always see Him within you, having so clear a view of what Jesus is and what He has done, that you may never again be vexed with doubts concerning Him or His Word. May you have such familiar communion with Him that you may believe Him implicitly and never dream of distrusting Him. As a child lies on its mothers bosom, so may you rest upon the love of Christ, leaning all your weight upon Him. May you never have to inquire for your Well-Beloved, but know that He abides within you, as surely as your heart remains in living energy within your body. Be not afraid to ask, and seek, and believe for thisthe ladder is meant to be climbed! This experience is attainable! Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith!

This second step of the ladder is worth reaching. Rise to it, you struggling Believers! The Lord bring us all to it by the Holy Spirit! And when we climb thus far, what next? This third step is a broad one and it has three parts to it. Its first part is establishmentThat you, being rooted and grounded in love. When you are strengthened and when Jesus dwells in your heart, then you are no longer carried about with every wind of doctrine, but you are rooted, like a cedar in Lebanon which receives but fears not the stormy wind. You are no longer upset by doubts and fears, as a bowing wall is thrown over by a breeze, for you are grounded like a well-built house, settled on its rocky foundation. Your wall has made its last settlement and has settled down upon the eternal Foundation which can never be removedJesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

No man attains to this rooted and grounded state unless Christ dwells in his heart. The indwelling is necessary to the settlement of the house. He that has Jesus dwelling in him laughs to scorn the whimsies and fancies which men call philosophies. He knows nothing about advanced thought, for, by the Grace of God, he has advanced as far as he needs to advance since he has come to live in Christ and Christ has come to live in him! What is there beyond this as to firmness of basis and foundation? If there is anything beyond this, we do not know it, nor want to know it! We are perfectly content and satisfied to remain with the love of Christ abiding in our soulsthat Christ may dwell in our hearts, that we may be rooted and grounded in love.

Oh, when the heart gets grounded in lovewhen it loves Christ and feels the love of Christ shed abroad in it by the Holy Spirit, it says, To where do you invite me? To what fair havens could I sail? With what do you tempt me? What can be sweeter under Heaven or in Heaven than that which I now enjoy, namely, the love of an indwelling Christ? Oh, evil sirens, you sing to me in vain! You might sooner tempt the angels in Heaven to descend to Hell than persuade my spirit to leave my Beloved who dwells in me and lives in meand who has grounded and settled me in a deep sense of His eternal love.

Side by side with this very blessed establishment in the faith, for which I would bow my knees as Paul did for the Ephesians, that you may all have it, comes a comprehension of Divine love. How anxiously do I desire your firm settlement in the Truth of God, for this is an age which needs rooted and grounded saints! This is a time when men need to be confirmed in the present Truth of God and to hold it as with an iron hand. Side by side with that, however, we would have you receive this further blessing, namely, a comprehension of the love of ChristThat you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heightthat you may have no crude idea, but a clear and definite understanding of what the love of Christ is to you.

As a mathematician makes calculations and arrives at clear ideas; as a mechanic cubes a quantity and takes its length, and depth, and height, so may the Lord Jesus Christs love be to you no more an airy dream, but a substantial fact about which you know distinctly, being taught of the living God by the Holy Spirit. You know that Christs love is an eternal love, without beginning. It is an everlasting love, without end. It is a love that knows no boundary. It is a love that never lessens and cannot be increased. It is a love that burns freely in His heart towards you as an unworthy, undeserving sinner! It is a love which led Him to live for you in human nature and to die for you in His own body on the Cross. It is a love which made Him stand Sponsor, Surety and Substitute for you. It is a love which led Him to bear your load of sin and die while doing soand bury that sin of yours in a sepulcher out of which it never shall rise!

You know that it is a love which made Him rise again and mount the heavens and sit at the right hand of God, still doing all for youliving, that you may live; pleading, that you may be preserved; preparing Heaven, that you may come there to dwell with Himand intending to come, byand-by, that He may receive you to Himself, that where He is, there you may also be. Oh, Beloved, this is a delightful thing! First, to be strengthened, then to have Christ dwelling in you, and then to begin to know the measure of His immeasurable love! This is to be taught of Godwhen you are able to speak of height, depth, length, breadth and so see the Saviors love to be a tangible, real, practical, efficient thing!

How blessed to comprehend that Divine love which, after all, is incomprehensible! I know that some of you who have been lately converted think that you know all about it, but you do not, for I tell you freely that some of us who have now known the Lord for a third of a century must still confess that we have only coasted along the shore of this great world of love, while into the center of the bright continent we have never yet been able to penetrate! I could introduce you to friends who have been 50 years in Christ and though they hold a constant jubilee in the sense of His love, yet they will tell you that they are only scholars on the lowest form, beginning to spell out the alphabet of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

You do not know what lies before you, young saintsbut press onask the Lord to make you stronger and you shall then entertain your Lord as a perpetual Guest within your bosom! And you shall come to know what fathers in the Church have loved to learnthe heights and depths of unsearchable love! Be this our prayer at this moment

*Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell   
By faith and love in every breast!   
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel   
The joys that cannot be expressed!   
Come fill our hearts with inward strength Make our enlarged souls possess   
And learn the height, and breadth, and length, Of your immeasurable Grace!*

Do not overlook the third part of this subject, which is, that you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledgethat you may have acquaintance with that love which can never be fully known! This is the subject upon which I would briefly speak, taking the whole verse as a step that leads to another step. That you may know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, thatand now we came to the top step of allthat you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Here are four things to talk about. First, to know the love of Christ. Secondly, to know it so as to be filled with all the fullness of God. Thirdly, to be filled with the fullness of God. And then, fourthly, being full, what then? Does not that mean that when we are full we shall overflow to the glory of Him who filled us? God grant that we may! May the fullness of Jesus be glorified by our holy and useful outpourings!

I. First, then, TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Observe that Paul was not praying for people who did not know the love of Christ in the ordinary meaning of the term. They did know itthey had heard all about it from Paul. They had read about it in his Epistles and in other gracious records. They knew the whole story of the love of Christ through Apostolic teaching. Yes, and they knew it by faith, too. They had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of their souls, so that in the first verse of this Epistle he calls them, saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus.

What does he mean by his prayer that they might know the love of Christ? He intended another kind of knowledge. I know very many people, that is to say, I have read about them. I have heard of them. I have seen them in the streets and they touch their hats to me and I do the same to them. And thus I know them. This is a slender form of knowledge, yet I fear it is the kind of knowledge which most men have of Christ. They have seen Him. They have looked to Him and, blessed be His name, there is life in a lookbut they have gone no further. Even such a knowledge as that which comes by trembling faith is a knowledge that saves.

But I will tell you the people I know best. They live with me in my own house. I see them every day. I am on the most familiar terms with them this is the knowledge here intended! Read our text again. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. And thenthat you may know the love of Christ. Is not this the best way of knowing it? Jesus resides in your heart, which is the center of your love, and then you know His love! He teaches you to love Him and, as you learn the sweet lesson, you begin to know how Jesus loves you. You come to know Him by personal acquaintance, by having Christ dwelling in you so that you see Him, hear Him, feel His touch and enjoy His blessed company! This kind of knowledge is the most precious of all knowledgewhatever the subject may be!

You see the method of this knowledge; the way in which it comes to us. It is a sure and efficient way, for by having Jesus dwell in us and by becoming rooted and grounded in love to Him, we come to know Him as we can never know Him by being taught by our fellow men, or by all the reading or study in the world. This is the highest style of the science of Christ Crucified, for this comes of personal proof and experimental test and, therefore, it is not to be taken from us, but is woven into our consciousness. We have been taught by certain modern philosophers that we do not know anythingI fancy our friends are not far off the mark if they only speak for themselves, but I object to their representing us. They tell us that we only know what our senses have been operated upon and, perhaps, we may know that certain things do thus operate, but we can hardly be sure.

One of these philosophers kindly says that religion is a matter of belief, not of knowledge. This is in opposition to all the teaching of Scripture! Take your pencil and read through all the Epistles of John and mark the word, know. It is repeated continually. In fact, it is the key word of the Apostles letters. He writes perpetually, We know; we know; we know; we know. Truly, Brethren, we know the love of Christ! When Jesus dwells in us, we do not merely believe in His love as a report, but we enjoy it as a fact! We have made its acquaintancewe have tasted, we have handled, we have experienced this heavenly gift! What a favor! To know the love of Christ! Do not forget that this only comes of Christs dwelling in us and of our being rooted and grounded in love to Him.

We cannot be certain of anything, someone says. Well, perhaps you cannot. But the man who has Christ dwelling in him says, There is one thing I am certain of and that is the love of Christ to me. I am assured of the loveliness of His Character and the affection of His heart. I perceive that He, Himself, is Love and I am equally clear, since He has come to live with me, that He loves me, for He would not have lived in my heart at all if He had not loved me! He would not cheer and encourage me. He would not rebuke and chasten me, as He does, if He did not love me. He gives me every proof of His love and, therefore, I am sure of it. I will have no question raised or if you raise it, you will kindly understand that I do not, for I have come to thisI know the love of Christ.

What a blessed knowledge this is! Do they talk of science? No science can rival the science of Christ Crucified! Knowledge? No knowledge can compare with the knowledge of the love that passes knowledge! How sweet it is to know love! Who needs a better subject to exercise his mind upon? And how precious is the love of Christ! The sweetest of all the sweets that life can yieldthe source of love, the mirror of love, the model of love, the love which surpasses all love, as the knowledge of it surpasses all knowledge! Who would not be a scholar when the book he reads in is the heart of Christ? Who would not be a student when the science is Christ Crucified; the lesson book Christ manifested; the Tutor Christ glorified and the prize Christ enthroned in the heart?

Jesus is most dear from every point of view, but how charming is it to see Him in the light of love, so as to know the love of Christ! You see, then, the way in which we come by our knowledge and the certainly there is in itand the sweetness of the Subject! I shall have to show you, as we go on, the efficacy of this knowledge, for when we know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, it follows, before long, that we come to be filled with all the fullness of God. Here is a sweet perfume brought into a mans house! For substance, it seems to be a little thingit can lie on his finger. Wait a few minutes and it has actually filled the room! Everyone exclaims, What sweetness! The fragrance perfumes all the chamber. They open the doorthe delicious scent is in the passageit has gone upstairs into every bedroom till the fragrance is diffused through all the house!

And if you open a window it invades the street and charms the passersby. If the love of Christ is really known in the soul, it is like a precious box of rarest aromaticsit diffuses itself till it fills our entire being! I do not wonder to find my text saying, And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God, for the love of the Lord Jesus is the most filling thing in existence! In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodilyand you are complete in Him, for of His fullness have all you received and Grace for Gracehow can we be otherwise than filled?

II. We must dwell a minute on that rung of the ladder to which we have ascendedTO KNOW SO AS TO BE FILLED. It is not every kind of knowledge that will fill a man. Many forms of knowledge make a man more empty than he was before. The knowledge of earthly luxuries tends to make a man hunger for them and so a new vacuum is created in his mind. When he perceives that there is this or that delight to be had, he becomes discontented till he gets it and so he is emptier than he was before. Much of human knowledge is described by the Apostle, thus, Knowledge puffs up; but love builds up.

Sometimes the more men know, the greater fools they become, for knowledge is not wisdom, though wisdom cannot be without knowledge. Knowledge in the hands of a fool is but a means of publishing his folly. Wisdom is the flower which grows out of knowledge, but all knowledge does not bear that flowermuch of it is barren. Brothers and Sisters, if you get a knowledge of Christs love, it is a filling knowledge, for it contents the soul! When a man knows the love of Christ to him, every part of his being is satisfied. We are made up, as it were, of a number of horseleeches, every one of which cries, Give! Give! Here is the heart craving for something to love. Oh, but when you love Christ, you have a hearts love that will satisfy you for all time! Where can such sweetness be? Your heart shall never go hungering again. His charms shall hold you fast!

There is the intellectwhat a horseleech it is! It is always craving for moremore certainty, more novelty, more wonder. But when the intellect comes to know Christ, it acknowledges that in Him dwells all wisdom! To know the Eternal Son is to know the Father and this is a knowledge which rests the understanding and fills up the mind. Imagination itself is content with Jesus. Hope cannot conceive anything more lovelyshe gives up all attempts to paint a fairer than He and she cries, Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved and this is my Friend. O you daughters of Jerusalem! No power or passion that is vital to our manhood is discontented with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before conversion we gad abroad and go to this house and to that to pick up scanty meals. But when Christ comes home to dwell with us, we sup with Him and no more go out since there is nowhere to be found anything that is as good as He, much less anything that can be better than He! When the love of Christ enters the heart, it is swiftly filled with a perfect satisfaction. A certain man of renown, not a thousand miles away, who has no very great love for the Gospel, says that he can influence and enlighten most people except those who hold the views of a certain notorious individual. That epithet I take to myself!

He adds, When once they receive his doctrinal teaching there is no stirring them an inch. Blessed be God for that! I scarcely hoped that the work was so well done and I am glad of the worthy gentlemans certificate. So it iswhen once you cast anchor in the port of Christs love, you wish for no more voyages! You will not change when you feel that it is well with your soul. You are convinced that there is no better article in the market than that which your soul has learned to feed upon and so you are not inclined to go further and fare worse!

Again, when the soul comes to enjoy Christ, it is filled in a most emphatic sense. It is not merely satisfied, but overjoyed! One said to me the other day, I am sure that you have a contented heart. Well, I replied, if I were pinched with poverty you might talk of my contentment, but God blesses me so richly that I have passed beyond mere contentmentI have all things and abound! I feel as if I can bless God all day long. Christs people are not merely safe and contented, they are filled! And well they may be, for there is enough in Christ for millionsand yet He is altogether ours. He has given Himself to us as a glorious whole!

A little patrimony may make a man contented, but what shall we say when our heritage is Christ, Himself? Contented? Why, our heart leaps as we survey our infinite portion

*In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am*

*And my heart does dance at the sound of His name.* When you live in the full enjoyment of the Lords Presence and abide under a sense of His love, you feel more happy than tongue can tell. Your heart is too full to holdit is like a vessel needing ventit possesses a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Once more, when the love of Christ comes to work upon the soulwhen it brings with it all its choice treasures then the mind of the Believer is filled with the fullness of God. What is it that the love of Christ gives to the objects of it? Let me ask another question. What is it which is worth having that it does

not give? He gives us light for our darkness; eyes for our blindness; food for our hunger; cleansing for our defilement; garments for our nakedness; healing for our sickness. He gives us strength for our weakness, joy for our sorrow, comfort for our distress, deliverance for our peril and triumph for our conflict!

When Jesus comes to dwell in the heart, He brings with Him such furniture, such provision that our entire nature is equipped, furnished, provided forin a word, filled with all the fullness of God. Christ does not long dwell in an unfurnished house. Oh, you that have a poor, povertystricken religion of which you have to say, like the elder brother in the parable, These many years did I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends, I beseech you, say so no more! Come, Friends, alter that tune and hear what the great Father saysSon, you are always with Me, and all that I have is yours. If Christ dwells in your heart, His Father is your Father! His God is your God! His Heaven is your Heaven! Yes, and His Throne shall be your throne, for He will make you to sit where He sits at the right hand of God in Glory! Oh, the blessedness of knowing the love of Christ! It fills the spirit to the fullest!

III. In a sentence or two I will pass over the third point, namely, WHAT IT IS TO BE FILLED WITH ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. Does it not mean that self is banished, for if the fullness of God has filled you, where is room for self? Does it not mean that the soul is perfectly charmed with all that God does for it? Filled with all the fullness of God. Does it not mean that every power of the entire nature is solaced and satisfied? Does it not mean that the whole man is occupied and inhabited by Godthat the whole nature becomes permeated with Grace, saturated with love, satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord? I will not talk more of it at this time. I hope that you will know by experience what that fullness means, if you do not know it already. May the Holy Spirit give you this glad experience.

IV. I want to come to the practical point that WHEREVER CHRIST DWELLS IN THE HEART BY FAITH WE RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF GOD INTO OUR SPIRIT WITH THE DESIGN THAT WE MAY OVERFLOW. Brothers, Sisters, I dare say you know what it is to be empty. Have you ever tried to pray when you are empty? Yes, and the result is a very empty prayer. Out of nothing comes nothing. And when there is no prayer in you and you pray, why, it is no prayer at all! You try to praise, but if there is no praise in you, your attempted hallelujahs languish and expire. If true praise comes forth from you, it must first have been within you.

But do you know what it is to pray when you are full of prayer? When the Lord has filled you with hunger, thirst, desires, hopes and expectationswhat an overflowing of prayer is with you! When the season of prayer is over and you go down to business, you cry, Alas, I never knew a quarter of an hour fly so quickly as this has done! How refreshed I am! I made no effort to pray, but I poured out my soul like water before the Lord. Yes, because you have been filled with all the fullness of God, therefore you have prayed readily and with fullness. In singing, you have felt the same plenitude of devotion. Sometimes when you have been praising the Lord, you have wished that you had all mens tongues in your mouth and that you had all the songs of birds at your command, and all the music of the spheres! You have desired to make the stars your keyboard, to play upon them a glorious Te Deumand yet you would not even then have praised your God as your heart desired. When you are full of praise, then you praise, indeed!

It is a blessed thing for our heart to get full towards God, for then we worship Him with a full soul. It may be only full of regrets, repentance and desires, but yet if it is full, it is a blessed fullness. Even if you are only full of groans, cries and entreaties, it is well. When God dwells in you, by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of supplication and devotion, then you live towards God with vigorous life. And, dear Brothers and Sisters, when you are all full of Divine Grace, you are filled for all the circumstances of life. You have lately buried a greatly beloved one. The news came upon you all of a sudden, but you were not afraid of evil tidings. Why? Because your heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. When the sad bereavement came, it did not overwhelm youat another time it might have done sobut the Lord was pleased to fill you with His Presence that you were quite prepared for the trouble.

Tomorrow morning if you go into the world filled with the fullness of God, afflictions may come in businessperhaps an extra heavy account will be sent in and you will be perplexed as to how to meet itbut you will not mind. You will be ready for the difficulty because the fullness of God will ballast you and save you from the rough winds. Perhaps tomorrow you will meet with a great success and if you are not full of Grace you will grow proud and lifted up. But if you are filled with all the fullness of God, if the Lord should make you as rich as Solomon, you would not grow worldly. If you are filled with all the fullness of God, you are as ready for prosperity as you are for adversity! Whatever happens to you in the future you will be prepared for it. If you are called upon to confess His name, if you are filled with all the fullness of God, courage will be yours!

And if you are called to endure great suffering, patience will be ready, for the God of Patience will grant you strength equal to your need. If a knotty problem poses you and you are filled with Gods wisdom, you will work it out. If you go forth filled with God, you are provided for every emergency. Come calamity or prosperity, whatever shape the temptation may assume, if the love of Christ has filled you with the fullness of God, you are ready for it! Look how prepared you will be to meet your Brethren and benefit them! Suppose you should meet a little gathering of Believers and they should ask you to speak a word? If you are full, your speech will be worth hearing. But if you are empty, your communications will be also empty.

Sometimes when we preach we are conscious of unfitness for the work because our soul is poverty-stricken. There cannot be much in our mouths if there is little in our hearts. Out of an empty sack you cannot shake a bushel of wheat, even if you shake it very hard. I have heard a Brother pray a wearisome while and I believe he was long because he had nothing to say. A horse can run many miles if he has nothing to carry. Long prayers often mean wind and emptiness. If you are full with a Divine fullness, your lips scatter gems more precious than pearls and diamonds. Filled with all the fullness of God, your paths, like Gods paths, drop fatness!

Do you not know Christian men of that sort? They are millionaire Christians who make others rich. I know saints whom I rejoice to visit because I always learn from them. It is a privilege to be in the company of full saints, just as it is a misery to hear the clatter of empty professors. It is said that we English people feel delighted if we sit by the side of a lord this I know, that if I get into the company of one of Gods aristocracy and have a quarter of an hours talk with him, and a little prayer as well, I feel quite lifted up! My heart is glad within me when I see the Grace of God abundant in a Brother or Sister in Christ. I want you, Brothers and Sisters, to be full of sympathy, full of pity, full of mercy, full of wisdomand when your Brethren hear you speak, they will be as men who have found running springs and filled up their vessels!

Lastly, if the love of Jesus Christ is in us so that we are filled with all the fullness of God, how ready we shall be to meet common folk that are not the Lords people as yet! We shall have a word on wheels for all who cross our path. You find it difficult to get the right words at the right time when you are talking to seekers? Just so, Brothers and Sisters, but may not that be because you are not full up to the brim? You are nearly empty and it takes you a long time to turn your tub up and pour out the little drop which hangs at the bottom. It you were full up to the brim, you would run over on all sidesand all around you there would be a holy moisture. If you are so full of spiritual life that you cannot help running over, you will, by the Holy Spirits power, pour out the right expressions when they are neededand thirsty souls will receive of the Living Water.

If we are quite full, we may move about among ungodly men and our presence will be a benediction to them. I read the other day of one who heard a man swear and tell a lie at the same time. He did not say anything, but the swearer was aware that the listener was aware of his falsehood. The reprover fixed his eye on the liar and was silent. That glance went to the others heart, for it said more than a dozen hard names. What the reprover did not say had more power than what he might have said! If you are only full of His life, the Lord will tell you what to do and guide you as how to do it! But I do not know how to speak, says one. Just so. You know that you have only a little Living Water at the bottom of your barrel and you do not know how to get it out.

Oh, but I feel such a difficulty in speaking. If there is only a little in the tub, the difficulty is to get it out. But if you are full, that difficulty will vanish. If the Lord has brought us to His fullness, it is a very high state to be in. Look at our blessed Master. Wherever He was and whatever happenedand wherever He wentHe did the right thing, then and there, and said the best thing that could be said because the Holy Spirit rested upon Him without measure! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would fill us, also, according to our capacity! If the water carts go along the road in dusty weather with nothing in them, they will not stop the dust! And if you Christians go about the world empty, you will not stop the dust of sin which blinds and defiles society!

If you go to a fountain and find no water flowing, that fountain mocks your thirstit is worse than useless. Likewise, therefore, do not forget that if you ever become empty of Grace, you mock those who look to you. Blessed is he of whom it is written, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of Living Water. This spoke Christ of the Spirit of God dwelling in men. God grant that you and I may understand His meaning! If anybody is saying, This is out of my sphereI have not come as far as this. I know it is so. I have not been talking to you. Yet I will not be altogether silent to you. Look to Jesus Christ at once and you shall be saved. Trust Him! Trust Him wholly! By faith you will begin to live.

After you begin to live, you will be strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord. After you are strengthened, Christ will dwell in your heart. After Christ has dwelt in your heart, you shall know the love that passes knowledgeand after you know the love that passes knowledge, you shall be filled with all the fullness of God! Do not begin at the end, but take things according to Gods order. A man who wishes to climb a ladder does not expect to put his foot upon the top rung at the first stephe ascends by degrees.

There is your first rungBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Take that first step at once! May the Lord help you! Beginning with faith in Jesus, you shall persevere and ascend till you reach the top of the ladder. The Lord be with you and in you to the fullest! Amen and Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #455 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LOVE OF JESUSWHAT IT ISNONE BUT HIS LOVED ONES KNOW   
NO. 455

A SERMON DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 18, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT SURREY CHAPEL, BLACKFRIARS ROAD.

And to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Ephesians 3:19.

IT is the distinguishing mark of Gods people that they know the love of Christ. Without exception all those who have passed from death unto life, whatever they may not know, have learned this. Without exception, all those who are not saved, whatever they may know besides, know nothing of this. An ungodly man may know something about Christs love. He may believe in the fact of it. He may perceive something of the theory of it. He may even be able to follow Believers in certain expressions of its enjoyments.

But to know the love itself, to taste its sweets, to realize personally, experimentally, and vitally, the love of Christ as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is the privilege of the child of God, and of the child of God, alone. This is the secure enclosure into which the stranger cannot enter. This is the garden of the Lord, so well protected by walls and hedges that no wild boar of the woods can enter. Only the redeemed of the Lord shall walk here. They, and only they, may pluck the fruits and content themselves with the delights thereof.

We may begin the exercises of this evening with a question of selfexamination, and we may continue them throughout the whole service, trying to press that question home to your consciencesDo I know the love of Christ? Have I felt it? Do I understand it? Do I feel it now? Is it now shed abroad in my heart? Do I know that Jesus now loves me? Is my heart quickened, and animated, and warmed, and attracted towards Him through the great Truth of God that it recognizes and rejoices inthat Christ really loves me, and has chosen me, and set His heart upon me?

We have started the first point. Every child of God knows the love of Christ. We advance another step. All the children of God do not know this love to the same extent. There are in Christs family babes, young men, strong men, and a few who are fathers. Now, as they grow and progress in all other matters, so they most certainly make advances here. Indeed, an increase of love, a more perfect apprehension of Christs love, is one of the best and most infallible gauges whereby we may test ourselves whether we have grown in Divine Grace or not.

If we have grown in Grace, it is absolutely certain that we shall have advanced in our knowledge and reciprocation of the love of Christ. Many here present have believed in Jesus and they know the love of Jesus. But oh, they know it not as some others here do who have gone into the inner

chamber and have been made to drink of the spiced wine of Christs pomegranate! Some of you have begun to climb the mountain, and the view which lies at your feet is lovely and passing fair. But the landscape is not such as would greet your eyes if you could but stand where advanced saints are standing nowand could look to the east and to the west, to the north and to the southand see all the lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

To change the figurethe love of Christ is comparable to Jacobs ladder. Some of us are standing on the lower rungs, and there are others who are ascending and who rest half way. Others, still, are getting up so high that we can scarcely see them by reason of the dimness of our sight. And there are some, perhaps at this hour, who have just reached the topmost rung of this knowledge and are now stepping, as it were, into the arms of Christ who awaits them at the top! They have attained unto their perfection. Here they shall find repose. They shall rest in His love and with the eternal songs of Heaven they shall rejoice forever and forever.

I want, tonight, to bring you, who are the people of God, to the bottom of the ladder. I want to encourage you to put your feet upon the first rung of it. And then go step by step with you, till, I hope, before we have done, if God the Holy Spirit is with us here, we shall have gotten very high up that ladder. And then we shall go away hoping never to come down again, only wishing, with Peter, that we may tarry on the mount and build for us tabernacles that we may sit on the summit of the mountain with our Lord forever.

I. Well then, to come first of all to the bottom of the ladder. One of the lowest ways of knowing the love of Christ may be described as the doctrinal methodvery useful onebut nothing to be compared to those that we shall have to mention afterwards. If a man would know the love of Christ, he should endeavor to study the Word of God with care, attention, constancy, and with dependence upon the Spirits illumination that he may be enabled to understand aright.

It is well for a Christian man to be thoroughly established in the faith once delivered to the saints. It is an ill day for a man when he ceases to hold fast to the form of sound words which was delivered to us by Christ Himself and His holy Apostles. Depend upon it, doctrinal ignorance will always make Churches weak. But where saints are fed upon the finest of the wheat, and are made to suck of the honey out of the rock, and to eat of the manna and fatness of Gospel doctrine, they will, all other things being equal, become the strongest and most valiant Believers on the face of the earth.

There is a tendency in these times to depreciate the value of Gospel doctrines. Oh, I beseech you, be not led astray by this error. There are in the Word of God certain things really taught. Do not believe that the Bible is a lump of wax to be shaped just as you please. Do not imagine that, Yes, is right, and that No, which contradicts it, is right, too. The Lord has written this Book intending to teach us something, and a moderate understanding, sanctified by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will enable you to know what the Lord does mean to teach you, especially upon such a vital point as this. Do not, I beseech you, say, Oh, it does not much matter what doctrines I hold.

You are as much responsible for using your judgment as you are for using your hands and your feet. God never did free a conscience from His jurisdiction. Conscience is free, but not before God. You have a right to your convictions as far as I am concerned. But if your convictions are wrong, you have no right to them before God. There are certain things that are Truths of God, and there are others that are contradictionssee that you get fast hold of Wisdomand that you do not let her go.

There is a tendency, however, on the other hand in certain quarters, to make doctrinal knowledge everything. I have seen, to my inexpressible grief, the Doctrines of Grace made a huge stone to be rolled at the mouth of the sepulcher of a dead Christ. And I have seen sound doctrine, so called, made as a very seal to seal in the dead Christ, lest by any means the energy of His Grace should come out for the salvation of sinners. Oh, what is doctrine, after all, but a throne whereon Christ sits? And when that throne is vacant, what is the throne to us? It is the Monarch and not the throne that we reverence and esteem.

Doctrines are but as the shovel and the tongs of the altar, while Christ is the smoking sacrifice. Doctrines are Christs garmentsverily they all smell of myrrh and cassia and aloes out of ivory palaces, whereby they make us gladbut it is not the garments we care for so much as for the Person, the very Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, while I entreat you, (and I hope not to be misunderstood here), while I entreat you to be very jealous and earnest in attaining unto a clear doctrinal knowledge of the love of Christ to His people, yet when you have got it, do not sayI am the man! I have attained to eminence. I may now sit still and be content.

Sirs, this is but the threshold. This is but one of the first arches of a long vista of glorious Truths of God. This is but the lowest step of the ascent. You have but sat down on the lowest form in the school. You have much to learn yet! Oh, be not wise in your own conceits, lest you lose the blessed things which as yet have not been discovered by you. Verily it is a sweet thing to know Christs love in the doctrine, and to understand that it is without beginning. That it existed when as yet this world had not been made. When sun and moon and stars slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup. When as yet the solemnity of silence had never been startled by the songs of seraphs, and the wings of cherubs had never stirred the unnavigated ether! It is delightful to believe that

*Before the day star knew its place,   
Or planets went their round,   
The saints in bonds of Sovereign Grace,   
Were one with Jesus found.*

Equally precious is it to know the doctrine that this love is without end.

When all we see around us shall have passed away, as the foam dissolves into the waves that bear it, the love of Christ to His people shall be the same. And on and on and on throughout eternity He shall never cast them from His heart. Sweet, too, is it, passing sweet, to know that He loves them without change and without limit. That He loves them because He will love them. That He loves them not for anything in them, but simply because He has so much love in His heart that He must let it outand that He ordains to let it flow forth to them that they may rejoice in it.

All this is precious but, O Brothers and Sisters, if you only know these things as they stand in the creed bookif you only understand them as you find them in the catechismI tell you that you know nothing yet as you ought to know. If this is all your knowledge, you have just begun to learn. May God help you to go further, and to mount to higher and clearer regions than these. It is a blessed privilege to know Christ doctrinally, but it is only the beginning, the steppingstone to something better, even as love longs for intimacy.

II. And what next? Let us lift our feet and take another step. True saints know Christs love gratefully and thankfully, having experienced it. O dear Friends! Let me refresh your memories and tell you what you do know, rather than attempt to say anything which might be new to you. Do you remember the place, the spot of ground where Jesus met with you? Some of us do. Oh, that day of days! That first day of our spiritual life! Other days have lost their freshness in our recollection, but this one is like a coin newly minted from time, though it is years ago with some of us. Oh, that day! That marriage day! That feast day! That day of Heaven on earth! Our soul was burdened and bowed down to the very dust, and we thought we should soon descend into the pit where despair would be our portion forever. But as we went mourning on our way, we heard a voice saying to us

*Come here soul, I am the way.*

We turned our eyes to see what way this could be, when lo, we saw One nailed to a Cross. We marked the blood as it flowed from His hands and feet and side. We saw His eyes as they looked on us with inexpressible compassion. And we heard Him as He opened His lips and said, Come unto Me, you weary one, and I will give you rest. Oh, do you remember when you looked unto Him and when you came to trust Himjust as you werewith your soul? You had been learning about Christ, perhaps, for years. You had been taught about Him. You had got some knowledge of Him and some desire towards Him. But did you not learn more of Christ in one five minutes then, than you could have learned in a whole course of college education in theology, in years before?

And since that time, dear Friends, have we not learned Christs love thankfully to a very high degree? Day after day He comes to us. Night after night He draws the curtains of our bed. He is ever with us and all that He has is ours. He talks sweetly to us by the way, and He sits down by us in our afflictions and comforts us, and makes our hearts to burn within us. And as we think of all that He has done for us, we feel we do know something of Him, for gratitude has been our schoolmaster.

I know some Christians say they do not feel the love of Christ so much now as they did at first. Oh, shame on you, Brethren, shame on you, if this is true! What? When you owed Him for one mercy, did you love Him? And now when you owe Him for fifty thousand, do you love Him less? Why, if it is true that saints grow necessarily colder and colder, then it does not say much for their estimation of Christ. It would make Him out to be like some people we know, who are very agreeable to see once in a while, but we should not like to live with them long.

Let me share my witness that my Lord and Master improves upon acquaintance. The more I know of Him, the more I wish to know. And I think I do but speak the mind of all the Lords people when I declare that instead of having less love to Him, the more I experience of His favor, the more warm is my heart towards Him. Alas, says one, but I do not feel as I once did. Well, dear Friend, it may be that you make some mistake in reference to your own experience. When the passion of love was first lighted in your breast, there was, as it were, a blaze of the match, the paper and the wood, although the coals had not yet ignited.

Yours was then the flush of joy, but not the vehement heat. Now your heart is all on fire like a solid ruby. There is much more heat, though there is less blaze. So it is with some young converts. The first love they have is wildfire, and to tell you the truth, I would rather have wildfire than no fire at all. But as men grow older in Divine Grace, the fire will not diminish in intensity, if God has kindled it. But perhaps the flash and the flame, the glitter and the noise, may not be quite so palpable.

Yet I fear that if you do not love Christ better than you did. If you do not feel that there are new tendrils which bind you to Him. If you do not feel that it would be harder now than ever to give up your hold on the Savior, you have not begun to learn the love of Christ. When we know that love, when we feel gratitude for mercies received, then we see every mercy, both temporal and spiritual, coming from that love. Ungrateful souls cannot learn this love. They have the book of mercy but they are blind and cannot read it. Grateful souls, in every letter from Jesus, their absent Friend, whom having not seen, they love, and in every book of daily fellowship, and of daily mercy, read again that glittering sentenceHe loved me and gave Himself for me.

III. Let us pass on to the third step, we have not got far yet. We are only as schoolboys at our first school, and we have now to go on to something higher. The true children of God know Christs love in a way which I can only describe by the word practically. If any man would know His doctrine, let him keep His commandments. You know if a man is to be taught to swim, you could not teach him in Surrey Chapel. You might get the most skillful master in the world who should come and explain the way in which he should spread his hands and move his feet, but he never can be taught to swim on dry land.

And we cannot make Christians know Christ except by imitating Christ and by obeying Christ. When soldiers are wanted, the best place to make them is, doubtless, the battlefield. If we would have veterans, there must be the smoke and the smell of powder, for great commanders are not to

be manufactured in Hyde Park. And we cannot expect to have men who shall win victories, drawn out from mere loungers at the clubs. They must attend the drills, and by practice become qualified for their duties. A young man cannot learn farming by the study of books. To read books may be useful, if he takes them as companions to the great book of nature.

He must be made apprentice to some farmer who sends him out into the fields to see how they plow, how they sow, how they mow, how they reap, and how they house their corn. By entering practically into the various toils and duties, he becomes skilled in them. Just so, if we would learn Christ, we must be practically engaged in His service. We must learn His love by keeping His Commandments. You may sit in these pews and be preached to every Sunday. You may hear Gods Truth plainly and simply unfolded. But if you want to learn, and learn in such a way that you never will forget, it is the back streets that must teach you, the lodging houses, the haunts of poverty, and the dens of vice.

If any man would know the love of Christ, let him go where Christ went and to the place where a Savior is needed. Let him carry Christs light to give light to others, and it shall enlighten himself. Let him go forth to water other mens vineyards, and his own soul shall be watered, also. Whatever his Master bids him do, let him do it, and he shall learn his Masters will while he is doing his Masters will. But when men, at the very outset, make a profession of religion and then disobey Christwhen they refuse to keep His Commandmentswhen they say of this one, It is nonessential. And of the next, It is unnecessary.

And when they say of some duty, Well, I can leave that to others. And of some sphere of action for which they are especially adapted, I need not attend to that. Others can do that quite as wellwhen men, I say, enlist into Christs army and begin at once to refuse to march as they are told, and decline to go out to battle when the Captain gives them the commandit is a sure sign that they never will learn much of their Master, their Captain and their Lord. If you had asked Whitfield in his day, how he came to know so much about Christs love, I think he would have said that he learned more of it when he stood in Moorfields, or on Kennington Common, when the dead cats and filth were thrown at him as he preached Christ, than he ever learned in his bedchamber, or even in his closet.

If you had asked Rowland Hill how it was that he had learned so much of the love of Christ, I think he would have told you that he learned it while he was speaking to the poor, and to the needy, and while he was condescending to men of low estate, that by any means he might win some. Why, if a man should want to know about slavery, he might go and hear a lecture by an escaped slave and it would be very well for him to do so. But if he could go to the place where the whip is cracking, and the back is bleeding, and see the thing for himselfthen he would understand the cruelty of slavery, indeed.

So, if a man would know the love of Christ, he must lay himself out to discover the deformity of sin, and the awful degradation into which crime casts mankind. And then he will know that love which stoops from the highest Heaven, reaches down to the gates of the deepest Hell, thrusts its arms up to the very elbows in the mire to pull these accursed ones out of the pit of distraction and make them blessed forever among the shining ones before the Truth of God. Strict and practical obedience to the Masters commands gives an amount of knowledge which is not to be attained by sentiments of gratitude, much less by systems of doctrine.

This is a higher stage of Divine Grace, though not much higher. Yet, I would to God that more of us had even got here, for I fear there are many who have a name to live but who do not obey Christ. Many, perhaps, to whom the ministers command would be more potent than Christs command, and upon whom the law of the land would have far more influence than the Law of Christ. A Believer ought to be such a one that a mere word from Christ is enough for him. Or, as a Quaker was likely to express it, his heart should be like a cork upon the waters, which every undulation of the waves would affect. Thus should his heart float, as it were, in the Spirits influences, till every motion of the Holy Spirit, every Law and wish of Christ should affect him instantly.

I would be passively activeif you can comprehend such a contradictionI would be passive, so as never to have will or wish of my own. And active, so as to have the will and wish of Christ impelling me always to keep His commands. When a man comes here, he begins to show real progress in knowing the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

IV. There is a fourth and higher stage, by far, than these. There is a way, not known to many moderns, but much practiced by the ancients, of knowing the love of Christ by contemplation. Do you know that in the early ages of the Church they spoke more of Christ and of His Person, and thought more of Him than we do? When I have sometimes read the fathers, and some of the devotional books of Believers who are not much known, I have frequently had to say, Well, I do not see much here about justification by faith, but I see a great deal about the efficacy of the precious blood.

I do not read, perhaps, about the pardon of sin, but I read about the blood-shedding, and about being washed therein. The early preachers preached not so much of the Atonementthough they preached itit was the five wounds, the bloody sweat, the Cross, and the passion. We talk of the fruits and the effects. They seem to speak of the first great causethe Man, the Christ, the Cross, the vinegar, the nails, the spear, the cry of, It is finished, the Lama Sabacthani, the burial and the Resurrection. And in those times, whether or not it was that men had not so much to do as they have now, I cannot tell, but they found time to have long seasons of contemplation. And they would sit alone and worship and draw near to Christ and steadily fix their gaze upon His Person.

To them He was a real Person, whom the eye of their faith could see as clearly as the eye of sense can see outward objects. They looked, and looked, and looked again, till the love of Christ grew brighter to them

than the sun at his meridian, and for very dimness of mortal sight they veiled their faces and paused their speechwhile their souls were bathed in inward joy and peace unspeakable. There have been some such in these later times but not many. There was Isaac Ambrose, author of that book, Looking Unto Jesus. He was pastor of a Church at Preston, in Lancashire, and, it was his usual custom once a year, says Dr. Calumy, for the space of a month to retire into a little hut in a wood. And avoiding all human converse, to devote himself to contemplation.

It was true he then only had eleven months in the year to preach, but those eleven were a great deal better than the twelve would otherwise have been. For there, alone with his Master, he received such riches from Him, that when he came back, he threw about jewels with both his hands and scattered glorious thoughts and words broadcast in his ministry. That book, Looking Unto Jesus, is a blessed memorial of his quiet hours and his secret communion with Jesus.

Then there was Rutherford, the man who has expounded the whole of Solomons Song without knowing it, in his celebrated letters. When he was in the dungeon at Aberdeen, he exclaimed, first of all, I had only one eye and they put that out. It was the preaching of the Gospel, and before long he has got both his eyes back again. Hear him writing in his letters, My foes thought to punish me by casting me into a prison but lo! they have blessed me by taking me into Christs withdrawing room, where I sit with Him and am with Him both night and day without disturbance.

The expressions he sometimes uses are so rapturous that I would not quote them here. Love letters are not to be read in the streets, and the words which souls inflamed with heavenly fire sometimes use towards Christ are not fit for public repetition. For there are passages of love, there are street embraces of affection which we must not tell, for this were to commit a treason such as Paul might have done if he had told on earth those words which he had heard in Heaven, and which it would not be lawful for a man to utter here.

Do you know anything about this, dear Friends? Oh, I pray you do not think I dream! These things are realities. I pray you think not that I am enthusiastic or fanatical. There are many Believers who could tell you that it is their daily delight to be much with Christ. Oh, perhaps some of you know what it is to have Christ with you in your shop. Your hands are busy weighing your goods or measuring out your wares, but Christ is with you, and your hearts are content. Or, as I remember hearing an old saint say one Sunday, when he was preaching from that text he pronounced so strangely, When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.

Ah, he said, you do not know where I live. You think I live at so-andso, in such-and-such a street, but I do not, for I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God. Now there are some saints who, though they are in the world, are dead to it. It has no attractions for them. It cannot get their hearts. Their hearts are with Jesus. They are not here. And they have sent their souls onward to that place where their bodies are one day to go, to the Throne where Jesus sits and reigns.

I remember hearing these expressions once used at a Prayer Meeting. They struck my mind and they still abide in my memory. A Brother had been praying and had asked a very great benefit. O Lord, he said, give me Marys place

*Oh, that I might forever sit   
With Mary at the Masters feet,   
Be this my happy choice.*

Lord, I would sit at Your feet and hear what You have to say and receive it as a willing scholar receives his masters words. I thought he would stop there but he said, No, Lord, I have not asked enough. I have not asked according to the royalty of Your nature. Lift me higher! Lift me higher! Not at Your feet would I sit, but I would lean upon Your breast. Oh, put me where John was, so I may lean my head upon Your bosom. Let me not merely learn the Truth You teach, but may I feel Your heart beat and know Your love to me

*Oh that I might with holy John   
Forever lean my head upon   
The bosom of my Lord.*

Well now, I thought that second prayer was a noble one. But he had yet a third one to offer and he said, No, Lord, no. That is not enough. I have not asked yet according to the tenor of Your promise. You have lifted me from Your feet to your breast, now lift me higher, to your lips. And then he quoted the words of the songLet Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His love is better than wine. And he very beautifully paraphrased it like thisLord, let me give to You the tokens of my love, and receive from You the present tokens of Your love to me. And not only know it, and feel Your heart beat, but receive the token of it as my lips of prayer meet Your lips of blessing, and my lips of thanksgiving touch Your lips of benediction.

Oh, there are heights and depths in this blessed contemplative life which I must not tell you here! And I thank God that there are some men who, though they go very far wrong in doctrine, are very right on this point. And if they are right here, verily, they are right in the essentials. When a man can come right up to Christ and throw his arms around Him. When he can say, That blood is mine. That Christ is my joy. His love is my love. His Presence is my Heaven, His Character is my great example. I trust in Him, and I love Himthat man may say fifty things that are not right, but he has said the things that are essentially rightand his soul is safe.

Well, says one, I shall never get to know Christs love by contemplation. I have no time. Ah, you had better have an hours less sleep than lose this blessed contemplation of Christ. Oh but I have so much to do. Dear Friends, we can sometimes do more in one half an hour than we can do at other times in hours, according to the tenor of our minds. Now, I think that contemplating Christ winds up the soul and puts it into a right frame, so that when we come back we can do more for the Master than

we ever did before.

Perhaps you have seen them driving piles in the marshes. There is a large piece of timber that has to be driven deep into the ground, and you have seen those pile-driving machines. There is an immense weight and they pull it up, and up and up, before they let it fall. Now, if they only pull it up a little way and then let it dropwell it comes down with some forcebut not a great deal. But when they lift it as high as ever they can draw it up and then let it come down at once, why what a drive it gives the pile! It is the going up that gives it such force in coming down.

And I believe that those are the best sermons for driving the Truth of God into the sinners heart that come from ministers who have been wound up very high before they come down in the sermon. And I think your usefulness will be sure to be powerful and mighty, if in private you are wound up to the very summit of contemplative delight by thinking of the work, the sufferings, and the triumphs of Christ. Certainly the sweetness of it alone is reward, and then the benefit which follows will be a sevenfold recompense for a most pleasant exercise.

V. Well now, we have taken you up some height but we must prepare for a flight which is higher, still. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge by contemplation is very highbut there is a higher stage than this. There are times when I almost fear to speak of these things, but there are some here, surely, who will understand me, some here who have passed through the same state, and will not think that I am dreaming. There are times when the soul has long contemplated Christ, and there are some who know not only to contemplate but

to enjoy. Even on earth, faith sometimes gives place to a present and conscious enjoyment.

There are times with the Believer when whether he is in the body, or out of the body, he can scarcely tell. God knows, and though not caught up to the third Heaven, he is brought to the very gates, and if not permitted to see Christ on His Throne, he does so see Him on His Cross, that if an infidel should say to him, There is no Christ, he could say, I have seen Him. My eyes have looked upon Him, and my hands have touched Him after a spiritual sort. There are many such rapturous seasons as this on record in the biographies of good men. I shall quote but one or two, and I hope there are some here who have known them in their own experience.

In the life of Mr. Flavel, who was one of the most temperate of the Puritans, and one not at all given to anything like fanaticism, there is an event mentioned which once occurred to him. He said that being once on a journey alone on horseback, the thought of the love of Christ came upon him with great power. And as he rode gently along the road, the thought seemed to increase in force and strength, till at last he forgot all about earth, and even where he was. Somehow or other his horse stood still but he did not notice it. And when he came to himself, through some passerby observing him, he found that he had bled very copiously during the time. Getting off his horse he washed his face at the brook and he said, I did verily think as I stood there, that if I was not in Heaven, I could hardly hope to be more blessed in Heaven than I was then.

He mounted his horse and rode on to a place of lodging where he was to pass the night. Supper was brought in but left untasted on the table. He sat all night long without sleep, enjoying the presence of Christ, and he says, I was more rested that night than with any sleep I ever had, and I heard and saw in my soul, by faith, such things as I had never known before. The like occurred to Mr. Tennant, who was a man who spent many hours in private, and sometimes, when it was time to preach, he was quite unable to stand unless first carried into his pulpit. Then he would put his hands out and lean there and say such glorious things of Christ, that those who looked upon him verily thought that they looked upon the face of an angel.

Rutherford, too, is another specimen. When he preached about Christ, he preached so wonderfully, that on any other subject he was not at all like himself. And the Duke of Argyle was once so warmed when Rutherford got upon that subject, that he cried out in ChurchNow, Man, you are on the right strain! Keep to it. And he did keep to it, and the little mans thin voice seemed to swell with supernatural grandeur when he began to talk of his precious, precious Lord Jesus, and to extol and exalt Him who was the Bridegroom of his soul, his Brother and his blessed Companion.

Oh, these are flights of the imagination, you say. Yes, they may be, indeed, Beloved. But if you could get them some times, you would come back to the worlds cares and troubles like giants refreshed with new wine, caring nothing for anything that might happen. Christ would be so sweetly and blessedly within you, that you could bear the burden and think nothing of it. And though the grasshopper was a burden before, you could now carry it right readily.

Well, I have taken you up to where not many go in these times, but I hope there are some who will yet ascend there till they shall even embrace Christ, and who will sit down at His table till they shall know Ralph Erskines blessed sickness of love and, in the conscious enjoyment of a precious Savior, shall say in the words of the spouse, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head and His right hand does embrace me.

VI. But I want to take you higher than this. Not higher in some senses, but higher, really, for these raptures are, of course, only like angels visits, few and far between. But here is something which may be more lasting and which, certainly, is a higher state of mind as to the knowledge of Christ. To know Christ sympathetically, is a yet higher stage than any to which we have attained before. What do I mean by this? I will show you, first of all, what I do not mean. We will suppose ourselves standing on the brow of the hill with Jerusalem in the alley below. Jerusalem is to be destroyed by the Romans. The decree has gone forth that its sin must be punished.

Now, here is a Brother who holds very high doctrines in his head, but who has not much sympathy in his heart. Come up here, Brother. Do you see that city there? That is all to be destroyed! Do you see its streets? They are all to be crimsoned with blood! Do you see its temple? Not one stone of it is to be left upon another! What do you think of it? Well, he says, if they are to be saved, they will be saved. If it is in the purpose and the decree it will be so. I am sure I am very sorry if they should not be, but I do not see that it is any particular business of mine. The Lord will have His own and it will all be well.

Get down, Sir! What do you know about the love of Christ? Nothing! Give such a man as you that text, He beheld the city and wept over it, and you would not know how to preach from it, for you do not know the Saviors heart, and have not known His love.

But bring here another man. He holds the same doctrinal truths, but he looks down on the city and what does he say?   
*Oh, gladly my pity would reclaim   
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.*

Lord, what must I do? Give me anything to do for them! My hearts desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved. And the tears begin to flow, and when he turns to the Book and reads that Jesus beheld the city and wept over it and said, If you at least in this, your day, had known the things which belong unto your peace, he says, Well, I do not know how to explain that to my doctrinal friend. I do not know how to make these feelings quite square and tally with the doctrine. But somehow or other I know there is no disagreement, for I feel the one is true, and I also feel the sympathy in my heart. I know that God will have His own, but I hope He will have them through my instrumentality. I believe that His chosen will be brought in, but, O that it may be my happy lot to bring in some of them to the praise and the glory of His Grace!

Why, some professors say, I am not my Brothers keeper. No, but if you are not, I tell you what you areyou are your Brothers killer! You are one of the two. If you say are not your Brothers keeper, rest assured that you are a Cain, and that you will be your Brothers murdererfor we either do good or hate. It is impossible for us to be devoid of influence. If the rill runs through the marshes it makes them fertile. If you dam it up and make it stagnant, you have not destroyed its influence. Ah, no, you have only changed it into a fetid pool and its influence shall curse the valley with disease.

So with a good man. If he serves his Master, he is scattering mercy abroad. But let him, if it were possible for him to do so, let him cease to serve the Lord, and become idle, and then he scatters plague and death. Oh, do we know the love of Christ by feeling it in our own hearts? There are some of us who can say that we have felt that we could do anything for souls. When we have heard it said of the Master, He saved others, Himself He cannot save, we have felt that we would not spare ourselves if God would only spare them. And when Paul said he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his Brethren, while commentators have been thinking that over, and cannot make it out, we have had sympathy with it and have been able to say, We have felt the same.

We have felt that we could even be lost to save others and we have said, Let my name perish. Let me be forgotten if my congregation may only be saved. If my children may be blessed. If my hearers may be converted to God. Men in this state know Christs love after a wonderful and marvelous sort. May God teach you each this way. May He help you to weep like Christ, to work like Christyes, and to be ready to die like Christif it were necessary by such means to bring sinners to their Savior and their Lord. O that we could get here!

I know my dear Brother, the pastor of this Church, would desire nothing more for you than that you might know Christs love by feeling it in your hearts. O that Christ would come and look out of these eyes and weep down these cheeks! O that He would speak through these lips, till it should not be the old self, man, that thought, and spoke, and actedbut the new-born Spirit of the Lord Jesus that had come into us and possessed us with a higher and a nobler lifethat we might spend and be spent for Him!

I think I shall have but one step further to take you, though there are some which are higher still. Before I do so I must tell you one anecdote to guard you against a possible mistake. There is a tendency, in the contemplative knowledge of Christs love, to self-indulgence. I know at the present moment a dear servant of Christ. I shall always regard him as such. He may be known to some of you, though I would not like to mention his name. He was once a notable minister in this city and was exceedingly useful. He began the contemplative life.

He lived very near to Christ and his preaching was exceedingly sweet to his hearers. There were many converts. He had a large Church and it exceedingly prospered. But so sweet were his private enjoyments that he began to relax in his public duties. He did preach, but he seldom allowed himself to see his hearers, and at last arrived at such a pitch of retirement, that he could walk into his pulpit without even speaking to his deacons, and then deliver himself. But the mans usefulness ceased. Though still a gracious soul, yet he has missed his way, and ceased to be one of the honored leaders of Christs Church.

Now, there is a tendency, a wrong tendency, mark you, of getting so high and not wanting to get any higher. Even the contemplative life, itself, ought only to be considered as a steppingstone to something beyond. And when we get to the very highest point, we are still to say with Paul, as we sit down upon the milestone, Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, press forward to those which are before.

It is related of a certain monk, who, having been long in his cell alone, thought while in his devotions that he saw the Lord Jesus. Of course the tale is a fable, but I relate it for the sake of its moral. He thought he saw the Lord before him as crucified, and he heard His voice speaking sweet and comfortable words to him. Just at that moment, when his soul was in a very flood of delight, he heard the convent bell ring, and he remembered it was his turn to go out to the gate and give away bread to the beggars who stood there.

Oh, he had never heard that bell ring so dolefully before! It seemed to him like the knell of all his joys. The impulse of duty, however, was stronger than that of delight, and he went his way with a heavy heart to distribute the bread. As he came back to his cell, he thought, Ah, I shall never see that again! Christ is gone from me, and I shall never know these enjoyments again! When, to his surprise, there was the vision still. As he bowed before it with delight, he heard a voice which said, If you had stayed I would have gone. But since you did My work I tarried to give you your reward.

Now, there is a tendency, when we have been alone and in private, and have had sweet fellowship with Christ, for us to feelI do not want to go out from this. I do not want to be disturbed just now. I would rather not do anything just now. I do not suppose there are very many of you who get into this state, but there may be some who think at such times, I do not want to preach today. I would rather not do anything. It is best that I should be alone.

Ah, it is a strong temptation, and you must strive against it and say, No, I have enjoyments in my religion, but I did not seek my religion for the enjoyment it would give me. I must look higher than that, to the God I serve, and to the Lord and Master whose I am. I love the jewels He gives me to wear upon my fingers, but I love His Person better. I am not to look upon these rings and forget to look into His eyes. I love the sweet couch that He makes for me at night, but I am not to lie there and forget the fields that are to be plowed and the battles that are to be fought. I must be up and doing. The contemplative life must lead me to duty and then shall I know Christ even as I am known.

VII. And now, the last and highest step of all, upon which we can only say a few words, is that which is called by deep writers and experienced Believers on this point, the absorbing love of Christ. How shall I tell you what this is? I cannot, except I quote Wesleys words

*Oh, love Divine, how sweet you are!   
When shall I find my willing heart   
All taken up with you?*

I thirstcan you get as far as that? I faintthat is a high state, indeed! I diethat is the top   
*I thirst, I faint, I die to prove   
The fullness of redeeming love,   
The love of Christ to me.*   
I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me, said the Apostle Paul, and that is where we must getwhen the man ceases to feel himself, the Iand only recognizes himself as part of Christ. It is our individuality that we really have to get rid of in this matter. It is our selfish separateness, I mean. We need to feel that we are a part of Christ, a member of His body, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone.   
We have to get to where we have no more desire to act, or think, or feel according to anything that is herebut to send our hearts up to the great heart of Christ in Heavenonly tarrying here while our souls are walking the golden streets with Christ. I do not know if I might be bold enough to say, Blessed is the man who shall be able to attain to the state when that which thinks is the head of Christ, and that which feels is the heart of Christwhen the great seat of all the sensations, spiritually, is in Christ, and not in himself and he himself is   
*Plunged into the Godheads sea   
And lost in its immensity.*   
The Brahmins believe that the highest perfection is to be absorbed into God, and there is a certain truth in it, though not as they mean it. When we are lost in God we are highest. When it is not we, but Christand we have come to be with Him and His heart is ours, and His love and soul, and wish are oursthen it is that we comprehend the height and depth and length and breadth and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.   
Now, I have not said much tonight to the ungodly. But if I could make any of you feel your mouths a-watering after Christ by what I have said, I should be pleased, indeed. Oh, if you did but know the sweetness of the love of Christ, you would not be careless about it   
*His worth, if all the nations knew,   
Surely the whole world would love Him, too.* Blind bats eyes are those that cannot see beauty in Christ! Hard, stony hearts, that cannot feel any love to Him! What do you say, Sinner? Do you say, O that I knew Christs love! O that I knew His love to me! Sinner, He has sent me to you tonight to preach His Gospel. And it is His Gospel, though not the Gospel which some preach, for I have heard some finish their sermons thusGo home and pray. Go home and do your best to find Christ.   
All this is good enough advice but it is not the Gospel. The Gospel is Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe in Christ is to trust in Him. That is all it is to trust in Him. But I must repent, one says. Repentance is a change of mind, and is a blessed fruit of faith and comes with faith. That repentance which comes before faith is not true repentance, for it is a repentance that needs to be repented of. Where there is no faith, it is impossible to please God.   
That repentance which has no faith in it must be displeasing to God, and needs to be repented of. The first business you have, Sinner, is not to feel anything, but to put your trust in Christ. Your business is not to try to make yourselves fit to come to Christ, but to come to Him just as you are. You are to trust Christ and to trust Him now. Oh but I am a black with sin! Come and be washed. Oh but I am a naked sinner. Come and be clothed. But I am lost. Oh, Sirs, the Master has come to seek and to save that which is lost. You are not to find yourselves first, and then think He will come and find you. He is come to seek you.  
Hark! While the trumpet sounds in the street without meaning, I would sound the Gospel trumpet here. Come and welcome! Come just as you are! To come is to trust and simply to fall flat at the foot of the Cross and say, Jesus, I trust You to save me. That done, you are saved, and your sin is gone. He took it and was punished for it. You are righteous in Gods sight, for His righteousness is yours, and you are saved. Christ, the Head, is your Representative. You are delivered. Christ has broken the neck of your foe, and you are emancipated the very moment when you believe.   
Some persons dislike instantaneous conversions. Let them read the Bible and see what sorts of conversion are there. There is Saul of Tarsus, there is the Philippian jailer. There are the three thousand on the day of Pentecostthese are all instantaneous conversions. There is a man over there, near the door, who came in here. Perhaps he did not know what for, or to listen to some strange, out-of-the-way matter. That man, if Christ shall meet with him tonight, and lead him in the way of His Grace, may go out of this Chapel as much saved as if it were seven years ago when he first believed on Jesus, for   
*The moment a sinner believes   
And trusts in a crucified God,*   
he is saved, it is all done! The work is finished and there is no need that anything else should be done. The robe of righteousness has been completed. There is not a stitch to be added to it.   
Sinner, this is the glory of the Gospel. Trust Jesus and you are saved and saved forever, beyond the reach of destruction. May God meet with some soul here tonight, and especially may He now stir up you, His people, to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen and Amen.

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PAULS DOXOLOGY   
NO. 1266

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by   
Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Ephesians 3:20, 21.

This chapter has a whole service of worship within itself. It certainly contains a sermon, for Paul gives a very earnest address upon the unveiling of the hidden mystery so that the Gentiles are made partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel. It contains a prayer, for one of the verses begins, For this cause I bow my knees. And in the verses before us it closes with a hymn, a hymn of incomparable praise. Thus, in the compass of a short chapter, we have all those devout exercises with which our assemblies for worship are familiar, namelyinstruction, supplication, and praise.

It was meet that the Apostle should close the chapter as he does, for the doxology here given grows out of the chapter. It is its natural outcome and crowns the whole, even as the flower of the lily is borne up by the stem, completes it and adorns it. The chapter would have been altogether incomplete without the ascription of praisenot perhaps in its sense, but certainly in its spiritual development.

Mount Zion doubtless possessed in itself both glory and beauty, but the temple on its summit constituted its most sacred charm. Even so to a noble chapter this doxology is a Divine climax, adding glory and sanctity to all the rest. If you look the chapter through, you will see that the Apostle has represented the Gospel in its various aspects to different persons and generally has set it forth with the word unto. In the fifth verse he speaks of it as manifested unto the sons of men. It was not revealed to them in the olden time so clearly as now, but now unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, the Gospel is revealed and we live in its clear light, for which we have reason for great thankfulness.

It were a good subject to dwell uponthe relation of the Gospel unto the sons of men. The Apostle, a little lower down, in the eighth verse, speaks of the relation of the Gospel unto himself, Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given. What the Gospel may do unto other men is of great importance for us to allow, but the knowledge will little avail us unless we can testify of what it has done unto each one of us personally. All the gold mines of California are of less worth to a man than the money in his own possession. Can you, beloved Hearers, speak, each one for himself and say of the Gospelunto me is this Grace given?

Further on, the Apostle speaks of the angels, and in the 10th verse he says, To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. The Gospel has a relation to angelsthey have always had something to do with it, for of old they desired to look into it. And it is written of our Lord that He was seen of angels. We know, also, that they rejoice over penitent sinners and that they join in those ascriptions of Glory which the redeemed in Heaven present to the Lamb of God. Yet further, the Apostle, without exactly using the word, unto, dwells upon the relation of the Gospel to the people whom he addressed when he declares that he had prayed to the Lord that He would grant them, according to the richness of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

Thus having mentioned how the Gospel bears upon mankind at large, upon Inspired men, upon himself, upon angels and then upon the saints to whom he was writing, he turns with a full heart to look at its bearings upon God Himself. And now it is no longer unto principalities and powers. It is no longer, even, unto me, or unto the holy Apostles and Prophets. But his theme is unto HIM. I pray God the Holy Spirit to fulfill my desire at this time that every one of us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, may look wholly unto the Lord and spend the little time appointed for our discourse in reverent adoration of Him from whom all Grace comes and to whom all the Glory, ought, therefore, to return, for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. If unto Him there should be glory in the Church throughout all ages, then, to Him should there be glory in this Church at this present moment. O Lord, help us to render it unto You!

In our text we have adoration, not prayer, the Apostle had done with that. Adorationnot even so much the act of praise as the full sense that praise is due and far more of it than we can render. I hardly know how to describe adoration. Praise is a river flowing on joyously in its own channel, banked up on either side that it may run towards its one object. But adoration is the same river overflowing all banks, flooding the soul and covering the entire nature with its great watersand these not so much moving and stirring as standing still in profound repose, mirroring the Glory which shines down upon itlike a summers sun upon a sea of glass!

Adoration is not seeking the Divine Presence, but conscious of it to an unutterable degree and, therefore, full of awe and peace, like the sea of Galilee when its waves felt the touch of the sacred feet. Adoration is the fullness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of praise! Adoration seems to me to be as the starry heavens which are always proclaiming the Glory of God and yet, there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. It is the eloquent silence of a soul that is too full for language. Adoration is to prostrate yourself in the dust in humility and yet to soar aloft in sublime thoughtto sink into nothing and yet to be so enlarged as to be filled with all the fullness of God! It is to have no thought and yet to be all thoughtto lose yourself in Godthis is adoration.

This should be the frequent state of the renewed mind. We ought to set apart far longer time for this sacred engagement, or what shall we call it? Act or state? It were for our highest enrichment if we made it our daily prayer that the blessed Spirit would frequently bear us right out of ourselves and lift us above all these trifles which surround us till we were only conscious of God and His exceeding Glory. Oh that He would plunge us into the Godheads deepest sea till we were lost in His immensity and could only exclaim in wonder, Oh! The depths! Oh! The depths!

In that spirit I desire to approach the text and I ask you to turn your eyes away from all else to HIM, even to the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. I do not ask you to remember what the Gospel does for you except as you remember it to render praise for it. I do not ask you to contemplate the Gospel in its reference to men and angels, but only to consider the Lord Himself and to render Him Glory for ability to bless, enrich and sanctify above all our asking or thinking. Looking to the Lord, alone, let us draw near unto Him in spirit and in truth.

I. Our first consideration shall be, UPON WHAT PART OF HIS GLORIOUS CHARACTER SHALL OUR MINDS REST? The text guides us to the Divine ability. Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly. And it selects the Divine ability to blessto do according to the power that works in us. This, then, is the subject. What does the Apostle say of it? He declares that the Divine ability to bless is above what we ask.

We have asked great things in our time. We remember when it seemed the greatest conceivable thing for us to say, Father, forgive me. We asked a large thing when we requested the pardon of all our sins and an equally great thing when we prayed to be cleansed in spirit. When we felt our hearts hard and our natures depraved, it seemed almost too great a blessing to expect the heart of stone to be turned to a heart of flesh. We did, however, cry for gracious renewal, and the prayer was heard! Full many a time since then, in deep distress, we have besought the Lord for great deliverances. In abject need we have sought great supplies and in terrible dilemmas we have asked for great guidanceand we have received all these again and again.

The blessings sought and obtained have assuredly been neither few nor small. Some of us would almost seem to have tried the limit of prayer in the matters for which we have cried unto the Lord. We have, in times of holy boldness and sacred access, asked large things, such as one could only ask of the Great King. And yet our asking has been too short a line to reach the bottom of Divine abilityHe is able to do above what we ask! Our prayer at its best and boldest has many a boundary. It is limited often by our sense of need. We scarcely know what we need! We need to be taught what we should pray for, or we never ask aright. We mistake our condition. We know not how deep and numerous our needs are.

Our souls hunger is not keen enoughsin has taken the edge from our spiritual appetites and, therefore, we limit and cramp our prayers. But, blessed be God, He is not limited by our sense of need! His guests do but ask for bread and water, but behold, His oxen and fatlings are killed and a feast is made of fat thingsof fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. Yes, and our need, itself, is limited. We do not need

everything. Empty as we are, there are some things that can fill us even to the brim. But God is able to go beyond our absolute needs and He has often already done so. He has given to His redeemed more than, as creatures, they absolutely require to make them happy and blessed!

We might have been restored to the full stature of unfallen manhood and in consequence have been as Adam was before his sin, but, wonder of wonders, the Lord has done more, for He has made us His children and His heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs of Jesus Christ! This is not the supply of necessityit is the bestowal of honor, dignity and exceedingly great glory! And now, although our needs are, in themselves, very terrible and far greater than can be supplied by anything short of all-sufficiency, yet God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we actually need!

He will not treat us as men treat a pensioner, to whom they allot barely enough to live upon and count themselves generous for doing so. He will treat us as kings and princes and do exceedingly abundantly above all that we need! Thus does He leave our prayers far behind, outstripping both our sense of need and the need itself. Our prayer is also limited by our desire. Of course a man does not pray any further than his desires goand our desires are not always as much awake as they should be. We are sometimes very cold and slow in desiring good things. The nether springs make us forget the upper fountains.

Alas, like the foolish king of Israel, we shoot but two or three arrows when we ought to have emptied out our quiver! We bring but small cups to the well and take home but little water. Our mouths are not opened wide enough, for our hearts are not warm enough to melt the ice which closes our lips. But, blessed be God, He is not limited by our desires! He is able to bless us beyond what our souls have yet learned to wish for! And, alas, when we do desire great things our faith is often weak and there we are restrained. We cannot believe God to be so good as to give us such unspeakable blessings and so we fail. How much we lose thereby I scarcely dare pause to consider! Our unbelief is a great impoverishment to us.

Even when faith does become developed, and sometimes it does, yet I guarantee you its stature never reaches the height of the promise. No man ever believed God as much as he might believe, nor trusted His promise so implicitly as he might do, or put so large a construction upon the Divine Word as it would bear. O Brothers and Sisters, we have to thank God that He is not bounded by our narrow faith, but even goes beyond what we believe concerning Him! How often, too, we are limited in prayer by our lack of comprehensionwe do not understand what God means. Search to see if there is a single promise in the whole Covenant of Grace which any child of God perfectly understands. There is a meaning in the Covenant promisesa breadth, a length, a height, a depth not yet compassed.

God condescends to use human language and to us the words mean silver, but He uses them in a golden sense. He never means less than He says, but He always means far more than we think He says. For this let us magnify the Lord! His power to bless us is not bounded by our power to understand the blessing! Grace is not measured to us according to our capacity to receive, but according to His efficacy to bestow! He can enlarge us, my Brethren! O that He would do so now! Prayer is an exercise in which our minds ought to be expanded and our hearts enlarged! Has not the Lord said, Open your mouth wide and I will fill it? Yet our widest mouth is not the measure of what He can give us! Our boldest prayer is not the boundary of what He is able to bestow! Pray at your utmost, like Elijah upon Carmel! Pray as you will till the keys of Heaven seem to swing at your side and yet you can never outrun that Omnipotence to bless which dwells in the Lord God Almighty!

The Apostle then goes on to say that the ability of God to bless is above what we think. Now we can think of some things we dare not pray for! Thought is free and scarcely can space contain it. Its wings bear it far beyond all visible things. It can even soar into the impossible, yet thought cannot attain to the power of God to bless, for that is immeasurable! Have you not, at times, been filled with great thoughts of what God might do with you? Have you not imagined how He might use you for His Glory? He can do more than you have dreamed! Turn your pleasant dreams into fervent prayers and it may yet please the Lord to make you useful to an amazing degreeso that you shall be astonished at what you will accomplish. If of a humble shepherd lad He made a David, He may do the same with you!

Have you not, at other times, conceived great ideas of what the Lord will make out of you when you shall be washed, cleansed, delivered from sin and carried away to serve Him in Heaven? Ah, but you have no idea what you will be! You do not know, when you have guessed your greatest, how perfect and pure and blessed you will be in your Fathers house on high when He has completed in you all the good pleasure of His will! You have sung sometimes

*What must it be to dwell above!*   
And your thoughts and imaginations have gone to very great lengths in picturing the repose, the security, the wealth, the enjoyment, the perfect satisfaction of Heaven! Ah, yes, but the Lord is able to do more than has ever entered into your heart. There, fling the bridle on the neck of your imagination and let it, like a winged horse, not only scour the plains of earth, but fly through the clouds and mount above the starsbut its furthermost flight on the most rapid wings shall not bring you near the confines of the possibilities of God!

Your thoughts, even at their best, are not His thoughts! As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above yours, think however you may! How amazing a subject is now before us! What language of mine can adequately set forth the Divine ability to bless, when both the eagle eye of prayer and the eagle wing of thought fail to discover a boundary?

Now, I need to call your attention, in this passage, to every word of it, for every word is emphatic. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. Not above some things that we ask, but, ALL. Not above some of our dimmer conceptions, our lower thoughts, but above ALL that we think! Now just put together all that you have ever asked

for. Heap it up and then pile upon the top all that you have ever thought of concerning the riches of Divine Grace. What a mountain! Here we have hill on hill, Pelion on Ossa, as though Alp on Alp were heaped on end to build a staircase or a Jacobs ladder to the very stars!

Go on! Go on! It is no Babel tower you build and yet its top will not reach unto Heaven. High as this pyramid of prayers and contemplations may be piled, Gods ability to bless is still higherabove all that we ask or even think. Some render it, Now unto Him that is able to do above all things exceedingly abundantly, and so on. Well, take it so. God is able to bless us above all things! Above all the blessings that others could give usthat is little. Above all the blessedness which resides in creatures that is great, but not comparable to what He can do! Above all the blessings which can be imagined to be conveyed to us by all the creatures that are useful and beneficial to usHe is able to do above all good things for us. O Lord, help us to understand all this! Give us faith to get a grip of this and then to magnify and adore You! Alas, our adoration can never be proportionate to Your goodness!

Now, dwell on another word, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. The we refers to the Apostles as well as to ourselves. Paul was a mighty man in prayer. What a wonderful prayer this chapter containshow he finishes up, That you might be filled with all the fullness of God. I will defy any man to bring out the meaning of those words to the fullest. Yet when he had prayed that prayer, Paul felt that God could go far beyond his comprehension of it. I do not know how, but he says soabove all that we askand, of course, this includes himself!

Paul, in that, we, may be viewed as including the Apostleswe, the 12 who have come nearest to Jesus and have been personally taught how to pray by Himwe who have seen Him face to face and upon whom His Spirit specially rests. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask! The Apostles were Inspired. The Spirit of God was in them to an unusual degree. Their thoughts were larger than ours, but, says Paul, He is able to do above what we think, even we, His Apostles, the best, the most holy, the most spiritual of Christian men!

Oh, then, Brethren, I am sure He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think, for it is a terrible come down from the Apostles asking and thinking to ours! He must be able to do exceedingly abundantly above the asking or thoughts of such poor, puny saints as we are! Now, notice the Apostles use of the word, abundantly. He says, not only that God is able to do above what we ask or think, but abundantly. We might say of a man, He has given much, but he has still something left. That expression would fall sadly short if applied to the Most High! He has not only something left, but all abundance left! We have already understood but a part of His ways. We have been able to comprehend the mere remnant of His glorious Grace.

The reserve of goodness, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him far exceed our thoughts. Our Apostle, not content with the use of the word abundantly, adds another word, and says, exceedingly abundantly. He has constructed here, in the Greek, an expression which is altogether his own. No language was powerful enough for the ApostleI mean for the Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostlefor very often Paul has to coin words and phrases to show forth his meaning and here is oneHe is able to do exceedingly abundantlyso abundantly that it exceeds measure and description! Yonder ship is on the sea and the sea can bear it up, though it weighs several thousand tons.

Does that surprise you, my Brethren? No, for you know that the ocean could float not merely one such ship, but a navy, yes, and more navies than you could count if you continued to number them throughout the lifelong day. The far-reaching main is able to bear upon its bosom, ships innumerable! It supports them exceedingly abundantly. God is as the great ocean. What you have seen Him do is but as it were the floating of one single boat! But what He can do, ah, that is exceedingly abundantly above what you ask or think! There flows our beautiful river among the meadows and the child dips its cup to drink and is fully refreshed. Yet all that the child can take is as nothing compared with what still remains and if along the banks of Father Thames, crowds of thirsty ones should congregate and drink their fill, both men and cattleyet all they could abstract from the waters would bear a very inconsiderable proportion to the volume which would still flow to the sea!

Lo, I see thousands of the redeemed crowding down to the allsufficiency of God! I see them lie down to drink like men that must take draughts both long and deep or die! But after they have all drunk and all the creatures that live have all been supplied, I see no lessening in the blessedness which pours forth from the Throne of God and of the Lamb, which can only be described in these words, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or even think. Now to help you to adore the Lordfor that is my one objective this morningthink how blessed you are in having such an all-sufficient God! It is always pleasant to take out of a great heap and to know that what you receive does not deprive others of their share.

Who cares to sit at a table where every morsel must be counted, for if you have more somebody must have less? It is a scant feast where the provision is exactly measured. Here, at the table of our God, there is need of no such economy. Eat, O Friends, drink, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved, for the feast is of the King and His provisions are infinite! Thus we see that there need be no limit to our prayers. You need never rise from your knees and say, Perhaps I was presumptuous. Perhaps I have asked more than God will give? Down on your knees, Brother, Sister, and ask God to forgive you for dishonoring Him by harboring such a thought! He is able to give exceedingly abundantly above what you ask. Thus we see, also, that He is still able to bless us, upon whom the ends of the earth are come, for if He was able to do exceedingly abundantly in the Apostles time, He is quite as able, still, and we may come to Him without fear.

Now, I see, also, that if my case is very special, still I need not tremble or stand in dread of need. What if I require superabundant Grace? I may have it! If I need exceedingly abundant help, I can have it. Ah, if I need more Grace than I dare ask for, I can have it! Yes, and if I require more

than I think, I may have it, for still my Lord is able to give it to me, and what He is able to do, He is willing to do. What comfort this should afford even to poor sinners who are far away from God. He is able to give you great forgiveness for the greatest possible sin! Sins that you have not yet thought of, He can pardon! Do but come to God in Christ Jesus and you shall find Him able to save to the uttermost.

If this little hint is taken up by some despairing heart, it may give it immediate peace! It cannot be true that God cannot forgive, for in Christ Jesus, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think.

II. Our second business is to answer the enquiry, IN WHAT WAY DO WE PERCEIVE THIS ABILITY? We cannot well praise what we cannot in any measure discern. The Apostle says, according to the power that works in us. We know that God can give us more than we ask or think, for He has given us more than we have asked or thought. Our regeneration came to us before prayer, for prayer was the first sign of the new birth already given. To pray for life is not a faculty of the deadbut regeneration puts into us the living desire and the spiritual longing. The first principle of life imparted makes us long after more life.

We were dead in sin and far from God and He surprised us with His preventing mercy. And in us was fulfilled the words, I was found of them that sought Me not. In this case He did for us above what we asked or thought. Redemptionwhoever sought for that? Had it not been provided from of old, who would have dared to ask the Lord to give His Son as a Substitute to bleed and die for man? Sirs, in providing a Substitute for us from before the foundation of the world, the Lord has already gone beyond mans thoughts or requests! Thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable Gift! He gave us Christ and then gave us His blessed Spirit, another surprising blessing which man could not have supposed possible for him to have obtained. Having done that which we never sought for, nor thought of, He is still able to amaze us with unlooked for Grace!

Moreover, where prayer has been offered, our heavenly Father has gone far beyond what we have asked or thought. I said unto the Lord, in the anguish of my soul, that if He would forgive my sins I would be content to be the meanest servant in His house and would gladly lie in prison all my life, and live on bread and water. But His mercy did not come to me in that scanty way, for He put me among His children and gave me an inheritance! Make me as one of Your hired servants is a prayer the Father does not hearHe puts His hand on His childs mouth when he begins to talk so, and says, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. We have asked for a stone and He has given us bread! We have asked for bare bread and he has given us angels food. For brass He has given silver and for silver, gold. We looked for a drop and the rain has filled the pools! We sought a morsel and He has filled us with good things! And therefore we are warranted in expecting that in the future He will continue to outdo our prayers.

Look at the plan of salvation, in the next place, and you will see how it suggests the ability of God to do more for us. Who is He that chose us? Who is He that has begotten us again unto a lively hope? It is God the Father! And when you mention Him as having put His hand to the work of Grace, you have opened a wide door of hope, for what is there He cannot do? He who has filled yon heavens with stars, scattering them broadcast as the sower sows corn, and could have made a thousand universes all full of worlds with as much ease as man speaks a wordhas He begun to bless us and can there be any limit to His power to deal graciously with us? Impossible!

Look next at His dear Son. He that created the heavens and the earth is made a Man and lies in a manger! He whom angels obey is despised and rejected of men! He who only has immortality, hangs on a tree and bleeds and dies! There must be, in those groans and those drops of sweat, and those wounds, and that death of His, a power to save altogether inconceivable! Immanuel made a Sacrifice! What ability to bless must dwell in Him! He must be able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or think!

And who is this, the Divine Spirit, who comes to dwell in us? Yes, literally to dwell in these mortal bodies and make these tabernacles of clay His temples! He has already mortified our lusts, already changed our hearts, already made us partakers of the Divine Nature! My Brothers and Sisters, is there any limit to the possibilities of the Spirits work in us? May we not fairly conclude that when God, Himself, comes to inhabit our bodies, He will deliver us from every sin and make us spotless as God is spotlesstill in us shall be fulfilled the commandBe you holy, for I am holy? Look at the planit is drawn to a wondrous scale! The Trinity in Unity is manifest in the Divine working within us and there must be something inconceivably great possible to us through the working of such mighty power!

Come then, dear Friends, and for a moment think of the power which actually dwells in you! If you are a Christian you must be conscious of a power in you far too great for your mental or physical constitution to bear if it were not restrained. Do you never experience groans which cannot be uttered, deep and terrible, like the moving of an earthquake, as though everything were loosed within you with extreme heaviness, anguish and travailing in birth? These pangs and throes betray the latent God within you, cramped for room within the narrow bounds of your new created and growing spiritual nature! Have you never felt the working and striving of strong desires, fierce hunger and insatiable thirsts? Have you not felt mysterious energies working like pent-up springs within your spirit, demanding space and vent, or threatening to burst your heart?

Are you never conscious of the Infinite struggling within you? Have you never felt like a little bird shut up within its egg, chipping at the shell to gain liberty? Are you not conscious that you are not what you shall be? Do you not feel Omnipotence rush through you, sometimes, with unutterable joy, till you have to cry, Hold, my Lord, this joy becomes not manit is the joy of Christ fulfilled in me and if I feel it any longer I must die, for in this body it is insupportable!? There are ecstasies, but we must not tell of them here. There are high mysterious delights of which it is scarcely

lawful to speak! There are lifting up in which man so communes with his Maker as to rise above himself and to be far more than maneven as the bush in Horeb, though but a bush, was rendered capable of burning with fire without being consumedand so was more than a bush, for it blazed with Deity!

Are not your hearts familiar with these sacred mysteries of the Heavenborn life? If they are, then you have the means of guessing at the Apostles meaning when he said, He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or even think, according to the power that works in us. God grant us to know this more fully.

III. Our third consideration isWHAT, THEN, SHALL BE RENDERED TO GOD? Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Unto Him be glory. Oh, my Soul, adore Him! Feel His splendor, let His exceeding goodness shine full upon your soul and warm you with its rays and let the warmth be adoring love! Oh, my Soul, proclaim His goodness and reflect the light which falls upon you from Himselfand so glorify Him by manifesting to the sons of men what He manifests to you!

Yes, my Soul, let all that is within you bathe in His boundless goodness and then glorify Him by perpetual service. Bow your strength to obedience! Be yoked to that mighty chariot in which Jesus rides forth conquering and to conquer, saving the sons of Adam. God deserves glory in the most emphatic sense and in the most practical meaning of that term. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, let us try to render it to Him!

But the Apostle felt that he must not say, Unto Him be glory in my soul. He wished that, but his one soul afforded far too little space and so he cried, unto Him be glory in the Church. He calls upon all the people of God to praise the Divine name! If all the world but it were dumb, the Church must always proclaim the Glory of God. If moon and stars and sun and sea no more reflect the majesty of the Creator, yet let the redeemed of the Lord praise Him, even those whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy! As Israel sung at the Red Sea with dances and timbrel, so let the Church of God exult, for He has brought us through the sea and drowned our adversariesThe depths have covered them, there is not one of them left. You, O Jesus, have redeemed our souls with blood, have set the prisoners free and made us to be a royal priesthood and, therefore, Your Church must praise You without ceasing!

But as if he felt that the Church, herself, was unequal to the task, though she is ordained to be the sphere of the Divine Glory, note how he puts it. In the Church by Christ Jesus. You, Lord Jesus, You are He alone among men eloquent enough to express the Glory of God. Grace is poured into Your lips and You can declare our praises for us! Brethren, do you not remember how our blessed Lord vowed to praise the Divine name among His brethren? Read the 22nd Psalm, and you will see how He becomes the chief musician, the leader of the choirs of the blessed! By Christ it is that our praises ascend to Heaven! He is the Spokesman for us, the Interpreter, One of a thousand before the Throne of the Infinite Majesty!

O Christwe are Your body, and every member of the body praises God! But You are the Head and You must speak for us with those dear lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh! You must offer our praises to the great High Priest and they shall be accepted at Your hands. Yet the Apostle was not satisfied, for he adds, Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus

through all ages. And the Greek runs exactly thus, unto all the generations of the age of ages. Perhaps the Apostle half expected the world to last for ages although he did not know when Christ might come, and therefore stood watching for Him.

At any rate, he desired that generation after generation might show forth the Glory of God and when there were no more succeeding races of men, he desired that that age of ages, the golden age, Gods age, the age of peace and joy and blessedness, whatever phases it might pass through, might never cease to resound with the Glory of God! Oh, blessed words of the Apostle! We cannot reach their meaning and if we did, still that meaning would be short of what God deserves

*Ill praise Him while He lends me breath; And when my voice is lost in death!   
Praise shall employ my nobler powers   
My days of praise shall be never past,   
While thought and life and being last,   
Or immortality endures.*

Our children shall follow after us and they shall praise the Lord. And their children and they shall praise Him and their children and they shall praise Him. And when the time comes that the earth grows old and Christ, Himself, shall descend from Heaven to renew all things, His saints shall magnify Him when He comes!

When He smites His foes and breaks them in pieces like potters vessels, the saints shall still adore Him! And when comes the end and He shall have delivered up the power to God, even the Father, still the everlasting song shall go up to God and the Lamb! And through the ages of ages when God shall be All in All, it shall be the bliss of every redeemed one forever and forever to say, Unto Him be Glory, unto Him be Glory forever and ever!

IV. I have done when you have doneand the last point concerns what you have to do. WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO ALL THIS? The text tells us in one word. It concludes with your part of itAmen. Some of you have newly been born to God. You are babes in His family. I pray you to glorify Him, this morning, who can do for you exceedingly abundantly above what you ask or think. Say Amen while we unite in ascribing Glory to Him!

And you, my Brothers and Sisters, who, like myself are in the vigor of manhood, in the very prime of life, working for God, let us heartily say, Amen, as well we may, for all the Grace we have had and still have comes from Him. And you, my venerable Brothers and Sisters who are getting near to Heaven, there is more mellowness in your voices than in ours, for there is a ripeness and maturity in your experience! Therefore say you first and foremost, Unto Him be Glory in the Church. Say it

now, all classes of Believersyou who are rejoicing in the Lord this morning, and you, also, who are sorrowful and sad, say, Amen. Though you have not the present joy, yet say, Amen in the expectation of it!

Be not laggard any one of you to say, Unto Him be Glory in the Church throughout all ages. Amen. Say it, O Church, below, without exception! Say it, all you militant ones. You saints that lie upon your sick beds and you that are near to death, yet say, Amen. You that suffer and you that labor, you who sow and you who reap, say, Amen. And when the whole Church below has said, Amen, O Church above take up the grand, Amen. You triumphant ones who have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, I need not challenge you to say, Amen, for I know you do it louder and more sweetly than saints below!

You sinners who have not yet tasted of His Grace, I think I might almost urge you to say, Amen, for if you have not yet obtained mercy, He is able to give it to you! You have come here, this morning, thirsty like Hagar and God sees you. You are searching for a little water to fill your bottle. See, yonder is a well, a well which flows finely. Drink of it, drink and live, and say, Amen, as you bless the Lord who looks on you in love! Perhaps you came here like Saul, seeking your fathers donkeys, or some such trifles. Behold, He gives you a kingdomHe gives you more than you ask or thinkfreely He gives it according to the riches of His Grace!

Accept it, and then say, Amen. Oh, with one heart and one soul let all of you that have been redeemed from death and Hell, or even hope to be so, join in this ascription

*Now to the Lord, whose power can do   
More than our thoughts or wishes know,   
Be everlasting honor done,   
By all the Church, through   
Christ His Son.*

Amen and amen!   
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TRUE UNITY PROMOTED   
NO. 607

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3.

YOU will remember that for several years I have received my mornings text for the first Sunday in the year from an esteemed Brother, a clergyman of the Church of England. This year he very kindly sends me this verse, which I hope will be useful to us all, reminding us of our former faults and of our present duty in the matter of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The Pope has lately been most lustily cursing us all. According to his nature, of course, must be his utterances. We could not expect a blessing where no blessing abides. And if we get a curse we only receive a polluted stream from a polluted fountain. It is an old saying that England never prospers so well as when the Pope curses her. I hope to see a year of great prosperity this year!

Let the poor deluded priest curse as long as he will, our God shall turn it into a blessing. In former days, when some of the Churches of Christ began to shake off the yoke of Popedom from their necks, the plea urged against reformation was the necessity of maintaining unity. You must bear with this ceremony and that dogma no matter how antichristian and unholy, you must bear with it, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. So spoke the old serpent in those early days. The Church is one, woe unto those who shall create schism! It may be true that Mary is set up in the place of Christ, that images are worshipped, sticks and rotten rags adored and pardons bought and sold for crimes of every kind. It may be that the so-called church has become an abomination and a nuisance upon the face of the earth, but still, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, you must lie down, restrain the testimony of the Spirit of God within you, keep His Truth under a bushel and let the lie prevail.

This was the grand sophistry of the church of Rome. When, however, she could not seduce men by talking of love and union, she took upon herself to use her natural tone of voice and cursed right and left right heartilyand so let her curse till she expires! Brethren, there was no reason in the argument of the Papist! If you will look at the text for a moment, you will see the text bids us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spiritbut it does not tell us to endeavor to maintain the unity of evil, the unity of superstitionor the unity of spiritual tyranny! The unity of error, of false doctrine, of priest-craft may have in it the spirit of Satanwe do

not doubt thatbut that it is the unity of the Spirit of God we do utterly deny!

The unity of evil we are to break down by every weapon which our hands can graspthe unity of the Spirit which we are to maintain and foster is quite another thing. Remember that we are forbidden to do evil that good may come. And it is evil to restrain the witness of the Spirit of God within us! To conceal any Truth of God which we have learned by revelation of God is evil! To hold back from testifying for Gods Truth and Wordagainst the sin and folly of mans inventionswould be sin of the blackest hue. We dare not commit the sin of quenching the Holy Spirit even though it were with the view of promoting unity!

The unity of the Spirit never requires any sinful supportthat is maintained not by suppressing the Truth of God, but by publishing it abroad. The unity of the Spirit has for its pillars, among other things, the witnessing of spiritually enlightened saints to the one faith which God has revealed in His Word. That is quite another unity which would gag our mouths and turn us all into dumb driven cattle to be fed or slaughtered at the will of priestly masters. Dr. McNeil has, very properly, said that a man can scarcely be an earnest Christian in the recent day without being a controversialist. We are sent forth today as sheep in the midst of wolves can there be agreement? We are kindled as lamps in the midst of darknesscan there be concord?

Has not Christ Himself said, Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword? You understand how all this is the truest method of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, for Christ, the Man of War, is Jesus the Peacemaker. But in order to the creation of lasting, spiritual peace, the phalanx of evil must be broken and the unity of darkness dashed to shivers. I pray God evermore to preserve us from a unity in which Truth shall be considered valueless! In which principle gives place to policy! In which the noble and masculine virtues which adorn the Christian hero are to be supplemented by an effeminate affectation of charity! May the Lord deliver us from indifference to His Word and will! This only creates the cold unity of masses of ice frozen into an iceberg chilling the air for miles aroundthe unity of the dead as they sleep in their graves, contending for nothingbecause they have neither part nor lot in all that belongs to living men.

There is a unity which is seldom brokenthe unity of devils, who, under the service of their great liege master, never disagree and quarrel! From this terrible unity keep us, O God of Heaven! The unity of locusts have one common objectthe glutting of themselves to the ruin of all around! The unity of the waves of Tophets fire, sweeping myriads into deeper miseryfrom this also, O King of Heaven, save us forevermore! May God perpetually send some Prophet who shall cry aloud to the world, Your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with Hell shall not stand. May there ever be found some men, though they are rough as Amos, or stern as Haggai, who shall denounce again and again all league with error and all compromise with sin and declare that these are the abhorrence of God!

Never dream that holy contention is at all a violation of my text. The destruction of every sort of union which is not based on the Truth of God is a preliminary to the edification of the unity of the Spirit. We must first sweep away these walls of untempered mortarthese tottering fences of mans buildingbefore there can be room to lay the goodly stones of Jerusalems walls one upon the other for lasting and enduring prosperity!

In this spirit have I spoken to clear a way to reach my text. It is clear from the text that there is a unity of the Spirit to be kept. Secondly that it needs keeping. And thirdly, that a bond is to be used. When we have enlarged upon these points we shall use the text in its practical applicationfirst to Christians in their connection with other churches and then to members of the same Church in their connection with each other.

I. First, THERE IS A UNITY OF THE SPIRIT OF WHICH THE TEXT SPEAKS WHICH IS WORTHY TO BE KEPT. You will observe it is not an ecclesiastical unity. It is not endeavoring to keep the unity of the denomination, the community, the diocese, the parishno, it is endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. Men speak of the Episcopal Church, the Wesleyan Church, or the Presbyterian Church. Now I hesitate not to say that there is nothing whatever in Scripture at all parallel to such language, for there I read of the seven Churches in Asia, the Church in Corinth, Philippi, Antioch, etc.

In England, if I speak according to the Word of God, there are some thousands of churches holding the Episcopal form of government. In Scotland, some thousands of godly churches are ordered according to Presbyterian rule. Among the Wesleyans, there are churches adhering to the form of government first carried out by Mr. Wesley. But it is not according to the method of Scripture, but only according to human invention to speak of a whole cluster of churches as one church.

Although I myself am much inclined to a Presbyterian union among our churches, I cannot but perceive in Holy Scripture that each church is separate and distinct from every other church. The whole being is connected by those different bonds and ligaments which keep all the separate members togetherbut not so connected as to run into one another to lose their separateness and individuality. There is nothing in Scripture which says, Endeavoring to keep up your ecclesiastical arrangements for centralization. The exhortation runs thusEndeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Again, you will observe it does not say, Endeavoring to keep the uniformity of the Spirit. The Spirit does not recognize uniformity. The analogy of His work in nature is against it. The flowers are not all tinted with

the same hue, nor do they exhale the same odors. There is variety everywhere in the work of God. If I glance at Providence, I do not perceive that any two events happen after the same formthe page of history is varied. If, therefore, I look into the Church of God, I do not expect to find that all Christians pronounce the same shibboleth, or see with the same eyes.

The same, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, we rejoice to recognize. But as to uniformity of dress, liturgical verbiage, or form of worship, I find nothing of it in Scripture. Men may pray acceptably standing, sitting, kneeling, or lying with their faces upon the earth. They may meet with Jesus by the rivers side, in the temple porch, in a prison, or in a private house. And they may be one in the same Spirit although the one regards a day and the other regards it not.

So what is this unity of the Spirit? I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we know it by having it in possession. It is most certain that we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit if we dont already have it! Let us ask ourselves the question, Have we the unity of the Spirit? None can have it but those who have the Spirit and the Spirit dwells only in new-born believing souls. By virtue of his having the Spirit, the Believer is in union with every other spiritual man and this is the unity which he is to endeavor to keep.

This unity of the Spirit is manifested in love. A husband and wife may be, through Providence, cast hundreds of miles from one anotherbut there is a unity of spirit in them because their hearts are one. We, Brethren, are divided many thousands of miles from the saints in Australia, America and the South Seasbut loving as Brethrenwe feel the unity of the Spirit. I was never a member of a Church meeting in the backwoods of America. I never worshipped God with the Samoans, or with my Brethren in New Zealandbut notwithstanding all this, I feel the unity of the Spirit in my soul with them and everything which concerns their spiritual welfare is interesting to me.

This unity of the Spirit is caused by a similarity of nature. Find a drop of water glittering in the rainbow, leaping in the waterfall, rippling in the rivulet, lying silent in the stagnant pool or dashing in spray against the vessels sidethat water claims kinship with every drop of water the wide world over because it is the same in its elements. And even so there is a unity of the Spirit which we cannot imitate which consists in our being begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We bear in us the Holy Spirit as our daily Quickener and walk in the path of faith in the living God. Here is the unity of spirit, a unity of life working itself out in love. This is sustained daily by the Spirit of God. He who makes us one, keeps us one. Every member of my body must have a communion with every other member of my body. I say must. The question never arises, that I know of, between the members of my body whether they will do so or not. As long as there is life in my frame, every separate portion of my body must have communion with every other portion of it.

Here is my fingerI may discolor it with some noxious drug. My head may not approve of the staining of my fingerit may suggest a thousand ways by which that finger ought to be put through a purgation and this may be all right and properbut my head never says, I will cut off that finger from communion. My tongue speaks loudly against the noxious fluid which has done my finger mischief and has blistered it so as to cause pain to the whole body, yet the head cannot say, I will have that finger cut off, unless the body is willing to be forever mutilated and incomplete.

Now, it is not possible to mutilate the body of Christ. Christ does not lose His members or cast off parts of His mystical body. And therefore it never ought to enter the head of any Christian whether or not he shall have communion in spirit with any other Christian, for he cannot do without itas long as he lives he must have it. This does not stop him in boldly denouncing the error into which his Brother may have fallen, or in avoiding his intimate acquaintance while he continues to sin. But it does forbid the thought that we can ever really sever any true Believer from Christ, or even from us, if we are in Christ Jesus.

The unity of the Spirit is preserved, then, by the Holy Spirit infusing daily life-floods into the one mystical body. And in proportion as the lifefloods become more strong, that union becomes more manifest. Let a spirit of prayer be poured out on all our churches and conventionalities will be dashed downdivisions will be forgotten and locked in each others armsthe people of God will show to the world that they are one in Christ Jesus! There are some points in which this unity of the Spirit is certain to discover itself. In prayer, how truly does Montgomery put it

*The saints in prayer appear as one   
In word and deed and mind,   
While with the Father and the Son,   
Sweet fellowship they find.*

There is a unity of praise, too. Our hymn books differ, after all, very little. We still sing the same songs and praise the same Savior. This unity will soon discover itself in co-workingthey have a union in their conflict with the common foe and in their contention for the common Truth of God. This will lead to communionI do not mean sitting down to the same table to eat bread and drink winethat is only the outward union but I mean that communion which consists in heart beating true to heart and in the feeling that they are one in Christ Jesus. It was a motto with Bucer, To love all in whom he could see anything of Christ Jesus.

Be this your motto, Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Make not your love an excuse for not offering stern rebuke, but rebuke because you love!

Some persons think that unless you smooth your tongue and cover your words with sugar, no matter though it may be sugar of leadunless you cringe and compliment and concealthere is no love in your heart. But I trust it will be our privilege to show in our own persons, some of us, how sternly we can dissent and yet love. How truly be Nonconformists to our Brethrens error and yet in our very nonconformity prove our affection to them and to our common Master.

It is said of some men that they appear to have been born upon the mountains of Bether, for they do nothing but cause division. And baptized in the waters of Meribah, for they delight in causing strife. This is not the case with the genuine Christianhe cares only for the Truth, for his Master, for the love of soulsand when these things are not imperiled, his own private likes or dislikes never affect him. He loves as much to see another Church prosper as his ownso long as he can know that Christ is glorified, it is a matter of comparative indifference to him by what minister Gods arm is made bare, in what place souls are converted, or to what particular form of worship men addict themselves.

Yet ever does he hold to thisthat there is no unity of the Spirit where there is a lie in the teachingthat where the souls of men are concerned he would be a traitor to God if he did not bear witness against the error which damns, and testify to the Truth which saves. And where the crown jewels of his Masters kingdom are concerned he dares not traitorously hold his tongue. And though his fellow subjects cast his name out as evil, he counts it all joy so long as he is faithful to his Master and discharges his conscience as before the Judge of the quick and the dead.

II. Secondly, THIS UNITY NEEDS KEEPING. It is a very difficult thing to maintain and that for several reasons. Our sins would, very naturally, break it. If we were all angels we should keep the unity of the Spirit and not need even the exhortation to do so. But, alas, we are proud, and pride is the mother of division! Diotrephes, who loves to have the pre-eminence, is very sure to head a faction.

Envy, too, how that separates friends! When I cannot be satisfied with anything which is not hammered on my anvil or run in my mold. When another mans candle grieves me because it gives more light than mine. And when another man troubles me because he has more Divine Grace than I haveoh, there is no unity in this case! Angerwhat a deadly foe is that to unity! When we cannot take the smallest disrespectwhen the slightest thing brings the blood into our facewhen we speak unadvisedly with our lipsbut surely I need not read the long list of sins which spoil this unity of the Spirit, for they are legion! O, may God cast them out from us, for only so can we keep the unity of the Spirit!

But, Beloved, our very virtues may make it difficult for us to keep this unity. Luther is brave and bold, hot and impetuous. He is just the man to lead the van and clear the way for the Reformation. Calvin is logical, clear, cool, precisehe seldom speaks rashly. It is not in the order of things that Luther and Calvin should always agree. Their very virtues cause them to fall out and, consequently, Luther, in a bad temper, calls Calvin a pig and a devil. And, albeit, Calvin once replied, Luther may call me what he will, but I will always call him a dear servant of Christ.

Yet John Calvin knew how to pierce Luther under the fifth rib when he was in humor. In those days the courtesies of Christians to one another were generally of the iron-gauntlet order rather than the naked hand. All were so much called to war for the sake of the Truth of God that even their fellow soldiers were treated with suspicion. And it may be with us that the very watchfulness of Truth, which is so valuable, may make us suspect where there is no need for suspicion and our courage may take us as sometimes a fiery horse has carried a young warrior beyond where he intended to have riddenwhere he may be taken prisoner to his own damage.

We must watchthe best of us must watchlest we fight the Lords battles with Satans weapons and so even from love to God and His Truth violate the unity of the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit ought to be kept, dear Friends, because Satan is so busy to mar it. He knows that the greatest Glory of Christ will spring from the unity of His Church. That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You. That they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

There is no Church happiness where there is not Church unity. Let a Church be disaffected and divided, the schism in the body is death to all hallowed fellowship. We cannot enjoy communion with each other unless our hearts are one. Our work for Godhow feebly it is done when we are not agreed! The enemy cannot desire a better ally than strife in the midst of our camp. Can you not agree, said a warrior of old, when your enemy is in sight? Christians, can you not agree to keep the unity of the Spirit when a destroying Satan is ever on the watch seeking to drag immortal souls down to perdition?

We must be more diligent in this matter! We must seek to purge out from ourselves everything which would divide and to have in our hearts every holy thought which would tend to unite us with our Brethren. I am not, when I join a Christian Church, to say, I am quite certain I shall never break its unity. I am to suspect myself of a liability to that evil and I am to watch with all diligence that I keep the unity of the Spirit.

III. In the third place, in order to the keeping of this, THERE IS A BOND PROVIDED, THE BOND OF PEACE. Beloved, there should be much peace, perfect peace, unbounded peace between the people of God. We are not aliens. We are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Realize your fellow citizenship! Treat not Christian people as foreigners and this bond of fellow citizenship will be one bond of peace. You are not enemies. Men may be fellow citizens and yet hate one another, but you are friends, you are all friends to Christ and in Him you are all

friends to one another. Let that be another bond.

But you go fartheryou are not mere friends, you are Brethren born of the same parentfilled with the same life. And shall not this be a bond? See that you fall not out by the way. Strive not one with another, for you are Brethren. This is not all. You are closer than thisyou are members of the same body. Shall this mysterious union fail to be a bond of peace to you? Will you, being the foot, contend with the eye? Or will you, being the eye, contend with the hand and say, I have no need of you?

If it is, indeed, the Truth of God and not a fiction that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bonesbecause the joints and bones in other mens bodies may not agreelet it never be said of the mystical body of our blessed Lord that there was such a monstrous thing in it! Let it never be said that the various parts would not co-work but fell to battling with another! I believe I have brought out the meaning of the text. There is a unity of the Spirit which is worthy to be keptwe ought to keep itwe must try to keep it in the bond of peace.

To come to the practical conclusion of the subject. First, in the connection of one Church with another. And secondly, in the connection of one Church member with another. It is not a desirable thing that all churches should melt into one another and become one. The complete fusion of all churches into one ecclesiastical corporation would inevitably produce another form of Popery since history teaches us that large ecclesiastical bodies grow more or less corrupt as a matter of course.

Huge spiritual corporations are, as a whole, the strongholds of tyranny and the refuges of abuse. And it is only a matter of time when they shall break to pieces. Disruption and secession must occur and will occur where a unity is attempted which is not meant in Gods Word. But it will be a blessed thing when all the churches walk together in the unity of the Spirit! When this Church, although it has been baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ and laments the neglect of that ordinance by others, yet feels that the unity of the Spirit is not to be broken and holds out its right hand to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

When yonder Church, governed by its elders, feels a unity with another Church which is presided over by its bishop. When a certain Church, which holds with mutual edification and no ministry, is yet not quarrelsome towards those who love the ministry of the Word! When, in fact, we have agreed in this one thingthat we will search the Word independently and act out according to our light what we find to be truebut having so done we will keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I say this is most desirable and this, it is, that we are to seek afternot the fusion of all into one denomination! But the keeping of each Church in its own distinct independent testimony in love with every other Church that is doing the same.   
Now, in order to this, I have a few suggestions to offer. It is quite certain we shall never keep the unity of the Spirit if this Church shall declare that it is superior to every other. If there is a Church which says, We are the Church and all others are mere sects. We are established and others are only tolerated, then it is a troubler in Israel and must hide its head when the unity of the Spirit is so much as hinted at! Any Church which lifts up its head on high and boasts over other churches has violated the unity of the Spirit. If other churches reply, One is our Master and all we are Brethren, they do not violate the unity of the Spirit, for they simply claim their rights and speak the Truth of God.

That other Church which forgets its true position as one in the family and begins to set itself up as mistress and claim pre-eminence over its fellow servants has put it out of its own power to keep the unity of the Spirit, for it has violated it once and for all. A Church that would keep the unity of the Spirit, again, must not consider itself to be so infallible that not to belong to its membership is sin. What right has any one Church to set itself up as the standard, so that those who do not join it are necessarily Dissenters?

It is true my Episcopal brother is a Dissenterhe dissents from me! It is true he is a Nonconformist, for he does not conform to meI would not, however, call him by such names lest I should arrogate to my own Church to be the one true church and so should break the unity of the Spirit. If I turn to history I may believe that my Church can claim a long line of ancestors descending from the Apostles, without ever running through the Church of Rome. But shall I therefore call a Brother who does not quite see this succession, a schismatic and denominate his assembly illegal? If he is a schismatic because he does not come to my place, why am I not a schismatic because I do not go to his?

Well, but he divides the church! He ought to come and worship with me. Ought I not to go and worship with him? Ah, but we are the larger number! Are Divine things to be ruled by the majority? Where would the Church of God be any day if it came to polling? I am afraid the devil would always be at the head of the poll. We wish to keep the unity of the Spirit and if we have a little sister, we will treat her all the more kindly, owing to the fewness of her members. If I want to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, I must never call in the magistrate to force my Brother to pay for washing my surplice, ringing my bell and winding up my clock.

I must not tell my Brother that he is bound to pay for the support of my worship. Oh, he says, my dear Friend, I pay for the maintenance of the worship which I believe to be correct and I am quite willing that you should do the same for yours. I would voluntarily assist you if you were poor. But you tell me you will put me in prison if I do not pay and yet tell me to keep the unity of the Spirit? My dear Friend, it is not keeping the unity of the Spirit to take away my stool and my table and my candlestick, and say you will put me in limbo, or hail me before an ecclesiastical

court. You send the constable after me. And then if I say a word about it, you say, Charity hopes all things.

Yes, among the rest it hopes that you will give up your sin in this matter. If we should stand possessed of a piece of ground where we bury our dead, and if there should happen to come a member of another Christian Church who would wish to lay his poor dead baby in our ground, there being no other convenient spot anywhere and he asks the favor, I think we can hardly be thought to keep the unity of the Spirit if we tell him, No, nothing of the kind! You had your child sprinkled, therefore it cannot be buried with us Christians! We will not have your sprinkled baby lying alongside our baptized dead.

I do not think that is keeping the unity of the Spirit. And I do not think when some churches have turned from their graveyard gate the mourners who have brought an unbaptized infantand the mourners have gone back weeping to their homesI do not think such churches have been endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Again, if churches are to agree one with another they must not make rules that ministers who are not of their own denomination shall not occupy their pulpits. I should be ashamed of you, if you passed a resolution that no one dissenting from us should stand in my pulpit. But we know a church which says, No matter how good a man may be. He may be a man as venerated as John Angell James, or he may have all the excellencies of a William Jaywe would not, perhaps, mind hearing him in a Town Hallbut into the sacredness of our particular rostrum these interlopers must not intrude.

For, says this church, Ours are ministers, yours are only lay teachers. Ours are sacramentsthe cup of blessing which we bless is the blood of Christ and the bread which we break is the body of Christyou have no sacramental efficacy with you. In fact, you are not a church, but only a body of schismatics meeting together to carry out what you think to be right. We tolerate you, but that is all we can do. Where is the unity of the Spirit there?

My dear Friends, I received this text from one of the most holy men in the Church of Englandif I expound it slightly for her benefit, he will, I trust, excuse me, for I do so in all honesty, desiring to aid him and many others in revision and reform. If this Church were in the same condition as the Church of England I would pray to be as plain in my remarks. I say it is an anachronism! It is a thing out of date for the nineteenth century for any one church in this land and that church the only one which defiles her hand by taking State pay, to stand up and say, We are the church! Our ministers are the ministers! Our people are the people! And now, dear Brethren, shake hands and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit of God.

Why, it is preposterous! Let us meet on equal ground! Let us lay aside all pretences to superiority! Let us really aid and not oppress each other! Let us mingle in prayer. Let us unite in confession of sin. Let us join heartily in reforming our errors and a true Evangelical Alliance will cover our land! If any church will take the Bible as its standard and in the power of the Spirit of God preach the name of Jesus, there are thousands of us who will rejoice to give the right hand of fellowship with a hearty greeting to all such! We are striving every day to get other churches and ourselves more and more into that condition in which, while holding our own, we can yet keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

Now, a few words to you in regard to your relationship to one another as members of the same church. If we are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the same church, then we must avoid everything that would mar it. Gossipgossip is a very ready means of separating friends from one another. Let us endeavor to talk of something better than each others characters. Dionysius went down to the Academy to Plato. Plato asked what he came for. Why, said Dionysius, I thought that you, Plato, would be talking against me to your students.

Plato made this answerDo you think, Dionysius, we are so destitute of matter to converse upon that we talk of you? Truly we must be very short of subjects when we begin to talk of one another. It is better far that we magnify Christ than detract from the honor of His members. We must lay aside all envy. Multitudes of good people liked the Reformation, but they said they did not like the idea of its being done by a poor miserable monk like Martin Luther. And so there are many who like to see good things done and good works carried on, but do not care to see it done by that upstart young Brother, or that poor man, or that woman who has no particular rank or state.

As a Church let us shake off envy! Let us all rejoice in Gods light. And as for prideif any of you have grown vainglorious of late, shake it off. I hope to exercise a ministry in this place which will drive out those of you who will not acknowledge your Brethren when they are poorer or of less education than yourselves. What if the man does mar the Queens English when he talkswhat does that matter, so long as his heart is right? As long as you can feel he loves the Master, surely you can put up with his faults of languageif he can put up with your faults of action. Then let us cultivate everything that would tend to unity.

Are any sick? Let us care for them. Are any suffering? Let us weep with them. Do we know one who has less love than others? Then let us have more, so as to make up the deficiency. Do we perceive faults in a Brother? Let us admonish him in love and affection. I pray you be peacemakers, every one of you! Let this Church go on as it has done for the last eleven years in holy concord and blessed unity. Let us remember that we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit unless we all believe the Truth of God. Let us search our Bibles, therefore, and conform our views and sentiments to

the teaching of Gods Word.

I have already told you that unity in error is unity in ruin. We want unity in the Truth of God through the Spirit of God. This let us seek after it! Let us live near to Christ, for this is the best way of promoting unity. Divisions in churches never begin with those full of love to the Savior. Cold hearts, unholy lives, inconsistent actions, neglected closetsthese are the seeds which sow schisms in the body! But he who lives near to Jesuswears His likeness and copies His examplewill be, wherever he goes, a sacred bond, a holy link to bind the Church together more closely than ever.

May God give us this and from now on let us endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I commend the text to all Believers to be practiced through the coming year. And to those who are not Believers, what can I say but that I trust their unity and their peace may be broken forever and that they may be led to Christ Jesus to find peace in His death! May faith be given and then love and every Divine Grace will follow, so that they may be one with us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST   
NO. 982

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 26, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Unto every one of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore He says, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it, but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things). And He gave some, Apostles. And some, Prophets. And some, Evangelists. And some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.   
Ephesians 4:7-12

OUR blessed Lord and Master has gone from us. From the Mount of Olives, the place where in dread conflict His garments were rolled in blood, He has mounted in triumph to His Throne. After having shown Himself for forty days among His beloved disciples, giving them abundant evidence that He had really risen from the dead, and enriching them by His Divine counsels, He was taken up. Slowly rising before them all, He gave them His blessing as He disappeared. Like good old Jacob, whose departing act was to bestow a benediction on his twelve sons and their descendants, so before the cloud received our Lord out of their sight, He poured a blessing upon the Apostles, who were looking upward, and who were the representatives of His Church.

He is gone! His voice of wisdom is silent for us, His seat at the table is empty, the congregation on the mountain hears Him no more. It would be very easy to have found reasons why He should not have gone. Had it been a matter of choice to us, we should have entreated Him to tarry with us till the dispensation closed. Unless, perhaps, Divine Grace had enabled us to sayNot as we will! But as You will, we should have constrained Him, saying, Abide with us.

What a comfort to disciples to have their own beloved Teacher visibly with them! What a consolation to a persecuted band to see their Leader at their headdifficulties would disappear, problems would be solved, perplexities removed, trials made easy, temptations averted! Let Jesus Himself, their own dear Shepherd be near, and the sheep will lie down in security. Had He been here we could have gone to Him in every affliction, like those of whom it is said, they went and told Jesus.

It seemed expedient for Him to stay, to accomplish the conversion of the world. Would not His Presence have had an influence to win by eloquence of gracious words and argument of loving miracles? If He put forth His power the battle would soon be over, and His rule over all hearts would be forever established. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the kings enemies, whereby the people fall under You. Go not from the conflict, You mighty Bowman, but still cast Your all-subduing darts abroad.

In the days of our Lords flesh, before He had risen from the dead, He did but speak, and those who came to take Him fell to the ground! Might we but have Him near us, no persecuting hand could seize us. At His bidding the fiercest enemy would retire. His voice called the dead out of their gravescould we but have Him still in the Church His voice would awaken the spiritually dead! His Presence would be better to us than ten thousand Apostles, at least, so we dream. And we imagine that with Him visibly among us, the progress of the Church would be like the march of a triumphant army!

Thus might flesh and blood have arguedbut all such reasoning is hushed by our Lords declaration, It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. He might have told us that His majestic Presence was expected by the saints in Heaven to complete their felicity. He might have said that for Himself it was fitting that after so long an exile and the performance of such stupendous labors He should rise to His reward. He might also have added that it was due to His Father that He should return into the bosom of His Love.

But, as if He knew that their trembling at His departure was mainly occasioned by fear for their own personal interests, He puts the consoling word into this formIt is expedient for you that I go away. He has gone, then, and whether our weak understandings are able to perceive it or not, it is better for us that Jesus should be at the right hand of God than here corporeally in our assemblies below. Gladly would a hundred Bethanies entertain Him, a thousand synagogues would rejoice to see Him open the Scriptures.

There are women among us who would kiss His feet, and men who would glory to unloose the latches of His shoes. But He has gone away to the mountains of myrrh and the hills of frankincense. He no more sits at our tables, or walks with us on our highways. He is leading another flock to living fountains of waters, and let not His sheep below imagine that He has hurt them by His absenceunerring Wisdom has declared that it is expedient for us that He is gone.

This morning, instead of standing here gazing up into Heaven like the men of Galilee, deploring that we have lost our Lord, let us sit down in quiet contemplation and see if we cannot gather profit from this great thing which has come to pass. Let our meditations ascend the yet glowing trackway of our Lords ascension

*Beyond, beyond this lower sky,   
Up where eternal ages roll.*

We shall, by the Holy Spirits aid, first consider, with a view to practical good, the fact of His Ascension. Secondly, the triumph of that Ascension. Thirdly, the gifts of that Ascension. And then we shall conclude by noticing the bearings of that Ascension upon the unconverted.

I. First, then, let our earnest thoughts gaze upward, viewing THE FACT OF THE ASCENSION. We lay aside all controversy or attempt at mere doctrinal definition and desire to meditate upon the Ascension with a view to comfort, edification, and soul profit. It should afford us supreme joy to remember that He who descended into the lower parts of the earth has now, ascended up far above all heavens.

The descent was a subject of joy to angels and men, but it involved Him in much humiliation and sorrow, especially when, after having received a body, which, according to the Psalmist, was curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth, He further descended into the heart of the earth, and slept as a prisoner in the tomb.

His descent on earth, though to us the source of abounding joy, was full of pain, shame, and humiliation to Him. In proportion, then, ought to be our joy that the shame is swallowed up in Glorythe pain is lost in bliss, the death in immortality. Did shepherds sing at His descent? Let all men sing at His rising! Well deserves the Warrior to receive Glory, for He has dearly won it! Our love of justice and of Him compels us to rejoice in His rejoicing. Whatever makes the Lord Jesus glad makes His people glad. Our sympathy with Him is most intense.

We esteem His reproach above all wealth, and we set equal store by His honor. As we have died with Him and were buried with Him in Baptism we have also risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead. So also have we been made to sit together in the heavenly places, and have obtained an inheritance. If angels poured forth their sweetest minstrelsy when the Christ of God returned to His royal seat, much more should we! Those celestial beings had but slight share in the triumphs of that day compared with us.

For it was a Man who led captivity captive, it was One born of woman who returned victoriously from Bozrah! We may well say with the Psalmist, in the sixty-eighth Psalm, to which our text refers, Let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God: yes, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him.

It was none other than Christ, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. It was the second Adam who mounted to His Glory. Rejoice, O Believers! As those who shout because of victory, divide the spoil with the strong

*Bruised is the serpents head,   
Hell is vanquished, death is dead,   
And to Christ gone up on high,   
Captive is captivity.   
All His work and warfare done,   
He into His Heaven is gone,   
And beside His Fathers Throne,   
Now is pleading for His own   
Sing, O heavens!   
O earth, rejoice!   
Angel harp and human voice,   
Round Him, in His Glory, raise   
Your ascended Saviors praise.*

Reflect yet again that from the hour when our Lord left it, this world has lost all charms to us. If He were in it, there were no spot in the universe which would hold us with stronger ties. But since He has gone up He draws us upward from it. The flower is gone from the garden, the first ripe fruit is gathered. Earths crown has lost its brightest jewel, the star is gone from the night, the dew is exhaled from the morning, the sun is eclipsed at noon. We have heard of some who, when they lost a friend or favorite child, never smiled againfor nothing could supply the dreary vacuum.

To us it could not be that any affliction should bring us such grief, for we have learned to be resigned to our Fathers will. But the fact that, Jesus, our All, to Heaven is gone, has caused something of the same feeling in our souls. This world can never be our rest nowits power to content us is gone. Joseph is no more in Egypt, and it is time for Israel to be gone. No, Earth, my treasure is not here with you, neither shall my heart be detained by you. You are, O Christ, the rich treasure of Your people, and since You are gone, Your peoples hearts have climbed to Heaven with You.

Flowing out of this is the great Truth that our conversation is in Heaven, from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, inasmuch as Christ is gone, our life is hid with Him in God. To Heaven our Head is gone, and the life of the members is there. Since the Head is occupied with things celestial, let not the members of the body be groveling as slaves to terrestrial things.

If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Our Bridegroom has gone into the ivory palaces. He dwells in the midst of His Brethren. Do we not hear Him calling us to commune with Him? Do you not hear His voice, Rise up My love, My fair one, and come away? Though awhile our bodies linger here, let our spirits even now walk the golden streets, and behold the King in His beauty.

Begin, O faithful Souls, today, the occupation of the blessedpraising God even while you linger below, and honoring Himif not by the same modes of service as the perfect ones above, yet with the same obedient delight. Our conversation is in Heaven. May you and I know what that means to the fullest. May we take up our celestial homestead rights, exercise our privileges and avocations as heavenly citizens, and live as those that are alive from the dead, who are raised up together and made partakers of His resurrection life.

Since the Head of the family is in Glory, let us, by faith, perceive how near we are to it, and, by anticipation, live upon its joys and in its power! Thus the Ascension of our Lord will remind us of Heaven and teach us the holiness which is our preparation for it. Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone from us. We return again to the thought. We cannot speak into His ears and hear His voice reply in those dear accents with which He spoke to Thomas and to Philip. He no longer sits at feasts of love with favored friends, such as Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He has departed out of this world unto the Father, and what then?

Why He has taught us by this the more distinctly, that we must henceforth walk by faith and not by sight. The Presence of Jesus Christ on earth would have been, to a great extent, a perpetual embargo upon the life of faith. We should all have desired to see the Redeemer. But since, as Man, He could not have been Omnipresent, but could only have been in one spot at one time, we should have made it the business of our lives to provide the means for journey to the place where He might be seen. Or if He Himself condescended to journey through all lands, we should have fought our way into the throng to feast our eyes upon Him, and we should have envied each other when the turn came for any to speak familiarly with Him.

Thank God we have no cause for clamor or strife or struggle about the mere sight of Jesus after the flesh! For though once He was seen corporeally by His disciples, yet now, after the flesh, we know Him no more. Jesus is no more seen of human eyes. And it is well, for faiths sight is saving, instructing, transformingand mere natural sight is not so. Had He been here, we should have regarded much more the things which are visible. But now our hearts are taken up with the things which are not seen, but which are eternal.

This day we have no priest for eyes to gaze upon, no material altar, no temple made with hands, no solemn rites to satisfy the senses. We have done with the outward and are rejoicing in the inward. Neither in this mountain nor in that do we worship the Father, but we worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. We now endure as seeing Him who is invisibleWhom, having not seen, we love. In Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

In the same fashion, as we walk towards our Lord, so walk we towards all that He reveals. We walk by faith, not by sight. Israel, in the wilderness, instructed by types and shadows, was ever prone to idolatry. The more there is of the visible in religion, the more difficulty there is in the attainment of spirituality. Even Baptism and the Lords Supperwere they not ordained by the Lord Himselfmight be well given up, since the flesh makes a snare of them, and superstition engrafts on them baptismal regeneration and sacramental efficacy.

Our Lords Presence might thus have become a difficulty to our faith, though a pleasure to sense. His going away leaves a clear field for faith. It throws us necessarily upon a spiritual life, since He who is the Head, the Soul, the Center of our faith, hope, and love is no more within the range of our bodily organs. It is poor believing which needs to put its finger into the nail prints. But blessed is he that has not seen and yet has believed! In an unseen Savior we fix our trust. From an unseen Savior we derive our joy. Our faith is now the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Let us learn this lesson well, and let it never be asked of us, Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? Let us never attempt to live by feeling and evidence. Let us banish from our souls all dreams of finding perfection in the flesh, and equally let us discard all cravings for signs and wonders. Let us not be like the children of Israel who only believed while they saw the works of the Lord. If our Beloved has hidden Himself from our sight, let Him even hide everything else, if it so pleases Him.

If He only reveals Himself to our faith, the eye which is good enough to see Him is good enough to see everything else, and we will be content to see His Covenant blessings, and all else with that one eye of faith, and no other, till the time shall come when He shall change our faith to sight. Beloved, let us further reflect how secure is our eternal inheritance now thatJesus has entered into the heavenly places.

Our Heaven is secured to us, for it is in the actual possession of our legal Representative, who can never be dispossessed of it. Possession is nine tenths of the law, but it absolutely secures completely our tenure

under the Gospel. He who possesses a Covenant blessing shall never lose it, for the Covenant cannot be changed, nor its gifts withdrawn. We are heritors of the heavenly Canaan by actual hold and sure titlefor our legal Representative, appointed by the highest court of judicaturehas entered into possession and actual occupancy of the many mansions of the great Fathers house.

He has not merely taken possession, but He is making all ready for our reception and eternal inhabitation. A man who enters a house and claims it, if he has any question about his rights, will not think of preparing it for the inhabitantsHe will leave any expenditure of that kind till all doubts are cleared up! But our good Lord has taken such possession of the city of the new Jerusalem for us that He is daily preparing it for us, that where He is, we may be also.

If I could send to Heaven some mere human being like myself to hold my place for me till my arrival, I should fear that my friend might lose it but since my Lord, the King of Heaven and the Master of angels, has gone there to represent all His saints, and claim their places for them, I know that my portion is secure! Rest content, Beloved, and sing for joy as the Apostles heart did when he wrote, In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.

Further, if Jesus has gone into Glory, how successful must our prayers be! You send a petition to court, and you hope for its successit is drawn up in proper styleand it has been countersigned by an influential person. But when the person who has backed your plea for you is himself at court, to take the petition and present it there, you feel safer still. Today our prayers do not only receive our Saviors imprimatur, but they are presented by His own hand, as His own requests.

Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need. No prayer which Jesus urges can ever be dismissed unheardthat case is safe for which He is Advocate

*Look up, my Soul, with cheerful eye   
See where the great Redeemer stands.   
The glorious Advocate on high,   
With precious incense in His hands.   
He sweetens every humble groan,   
He recommends each broken prayer!   
Recline your hope on Him alone,   
Whose power and love forbid despair.*

Once more, though I feel this theme might detain us long, we must leave it, and remark further, that, as we consider Christ ascended, our hearts burn within us at the thought that He is the type of all His people. As He was, so are we, also, in this world. And as He is, so shall we, also, be. To us, also, there remains both a resurrection and an ascension. Unless the Lord comes very speedily, we shall die as He did, and the sepulcher shall receive our bodies for awhile. There is for us a tomb in a garden, or a rest in the Machpelah of our fathers.

For us there are winding sheets and grave clothes. Yet, like our Lord, we shall burst the bonds of death, for we cannot be held by them. There is a resurrection morning for us because there was a rising again for Him. Death could as soon have held the Head as the members. The prison doors once taken away, post and bar and all, the captives are set free. Then, when we have risen from the dead at the blast of the archangels trumpet, we shall ascend also, for is it not written that we shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air, and so shall be forever with the Lord?

Have courage, Brothers and Sisters! That glittering road up to the highest heavens, which Christ has trod, you, too, must tread. The triumph which He enjoyed shall be yours in your measure. You, too, shall lead your captivity captive, and amidst the acclamations of angels you shall receive the, well done, of the ever-blessed Father, and shall sit with Jesus on His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits with the Father upon His.

I have rather given you suggestions for meditation than the meditations themselves. May the Holy Spirit bless them to you. And as you, in imagination, sit down on Olivet and gaze into the pure azure, may the heavens open to you, and, like Stephen, may you see the Son of Man at the right hand of God.

II. Let us advance to the second point, and dwell upon it very briefly THE TRIUMPH OF THE ASCENSION. Psalmists and Apostles have delighted to speak upon our Lords triumphal Ascension to the hill of the Lord. I shall not attempt to do more than refer to what they have said. Call to your minds how the Psalmist in vision saw the Saviors Ascension, and, in the twenty-fourth Psalm, represented the angels as sayingLift up your heads, O you gates. And be you lift up, you everlasting doors. And the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

The scene is described in rich poetic imagery of the most sublime kind, and it evidently teaches us that when our Savior left the sight of mortals, He was joined by bands of spirits who welcomed Him with acclamations and attended Him in solemn state as He entered the metropolis of the universe. The illustration which has usually been given is, I think, so good that we cannot better it. When generals and kings returned from war, in the old Roman ages, they were accustomed to celebrate a triumph.

They rode in state through the streets of the capital, trophies of their wars were carried with them. The inhabitants crowded to the windows, filled the streets, thronged the housetops and showered down acclamations and garlands of flowers upon the conquering hero as he rode along. Without being grossly literal, we may conceive some such a scene as that attending our Lords return to the celestial seats. The sixty-eighth Psalm is to the same effectThe chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the Holy Place. You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

So also in Psalm forty-sevenGod is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Angels and glorified spirits saluted our returning Champion! And, leading captivity captive, He assumed the mediatorial Throne amidst universal acclamations. Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly triumphing over them in it.

Our Lords Ascension was a triumph over the world. He had passed through it unscathed by its temptations. He had been solicited on all hands to sin, but His garments were without spot or blemish. There was no temptation which had not been tried upon Himthe quivers of the earth had been emptied against Himbut the arrows had glanced harmlessly from His armor of the Truths of God. They had persecuted Him relentlessly. He had been made to suffer all that cruel scorn could invent, but He came forth from the furnace with not the smell of fire upon Him.

He had endured death itself with love unquenched and courage invincible. He had conquered by enduring all. As He rose He was infinitely beyond their reach. Though they hated Him no less than before, He had been forty days among them and yet no hand was outstretched to arrest Him. He had shown Himself openly in various places, and yet not a dog dare moved his tongue. In the clear air, from far above the hills of Salem, He who was once tempted in the desert looked down upon the kingdoms of the earth, which had been shown Him by Satan as the price of sin, and reserved them all as His own by right of merit.

He rises above all, for He is superior to all. As the world could not injure His Character by its temptations, so no longer could it touch His Person by its malice. He has defeated altogether this present evil world. There, too, He led captive sin. Evil had assailed Him furiously, but it could not defile Him. Sin had been laid upon Him, the weight of human guilt was borne upon His shoulders, it crushed Him downbut He rose from the dead, He ascended into Heaven, and proved that He had shaken off the load and left it buried in His sepulcher. He has abolished the sins of His people! His Atonement has been so efficacious that no sin is upon Him, the Suretyand certainly none remains upon those for whom He stood as Substitute!

Though once the Redeemer stood in the place of the condemned, He has so suffered the penalty that He is justified now, and His atoning work is finished forever. Sin, my Brothers and Sisters, was led captive at our Immanuels chariot wheels when He ascended. Death also was led in triumph. Death had bound Him, but He snapped each fetter, and bound death with his own cords

*Vain the stone, the water, the seal,   
Christ has burst the gates of Hell.   
Death in vain forbids His rise,   
Christ has opened Paradise.   
Lives again our glorious King!*

*Where, O death, is now your sting?   
Once He died our souls to save   
Wheres your victory, boasting grave?*

Our Saviors Ascension in that same body which descended into the lower parts of the earth is so complete a victory over death that every dying saint may be sure of immortality, and may leave his body behind without fear that it shall forever abide in the vaults of the grave. So, too, Satan, was utterly defeated! He had thought that he should overcome the Seed of the woman when he had bruised his heel, but lo, as the Conqueror mounts aloft, He breaks the dragons head beneath His feet!

See you not the celestial coursers as they drag the war chariot of the Prince of the house of David up the everlasting hills? He comes who has fought the Prince of Darkness! Lo, He has bound him in iron fetters. See how He drags him at His chariot wheels amidst the derision of all those pure spirits who retained their loyalty to the almighty King! Oh, Satan! You were worsted, then! You did fall like lightning from Heaven when Christ ascended to His Throne.

Brethren in Christ, everything that makes up our captivity Christ has led captive. Moral evil He has defeated. The difficulties and trials of this mortal life He has virtually overcome. There is nothing in Heaven, or earth, or Hell, that can be thought to be against us which now remainsHe has taken all away. He has fulfilled the Lawits curse He has removed. The handwriting against usHe has nailed to His Cross. All foes of ours He has made a show of openly. What joy there is to us in this triumph! What bliss to be interested in it by the gift of faith in Him!

III. We may now turn to consider THE GIFTS OF THE ASCENSION. Our Lord ascended on high, and gave gifts to men. What were these gifts which He both received from God and gave to men? Our text says that He ascended that He might fill all things. I do not think this alludes to His Omnipresencein that respect He does fill all things. But allow me to explain, as I receive it, the meaning of the passage by a very simple figure.

Christ descended into the lowest parts of the earth and thereby He laid the foundations of the great temple of Gods praiseHe continued in His life laboring, and thereby He built the walls of His templeHe ascended to His Throne, and there He laid the topstone amidst shouting. What remained, then? It remained to furnish it with inhabitants, and the inhabitants with all things necessary for their comfort and perfection.

Christ ascended on high that He might do that. In that sense the gift of the Spirit fills all things, bringing in the chosen, and furnishing all that is necessary for their complete salvation. The blessings which come to us through the Ascension, are for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Observe next, that these filling blessings of the ascension are given to all the saints. Does not the first verse of our text sayUnto every one of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ? The Holy Spirit is the particular benediction of the Ascension, and the Holy Spirit is in measure given to all truly regenerated persons. You have all, my Brothers and Sisters, some measure of the Holy Spirit. Some more. Some less. But whatever you have of the Holy Spirit comes to you because Christ, when He ascended up on high, received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Every Christian having the gift of Christ in his measure is bound to use it for the general good. For in a body no joint or member exists for itself, but for the good of the whole. You, Brothers and Sisters, whether you have much Grace or little, must, according to the effectual working in you, supply your part to the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. See that you regard your gifts in this lighttrace them to Christ and then use them for the object for which He designed them.

But to some persons the Holy Spirit is given more largely. As the result of the Ascension of Christ into Heaven the Church received Apostlesmen who were selected as witnesses because they had personally seen the Savioran office which necessarily dies out, and properly so, because the

miraculous power also is withdrawn. They were needed temporarily, and they were given by the ascended Lord as a choice legacy. Prophets, too, were in the early Church. They were needed as a link between the glories of the Old and New Covenant.

But each Prophetic gift came from the Spirit through the Redeemers ascent to Glory. There remain rich gifts among us, still, which I fear we do not sufficiently prize. Among men, Gods richest gifts are men of high vocation, separated for the ministry of the Gospel. From our ascended Lord come all true Evangelists. These are they who preach the Gospel in various places, and find it the power of God unto salvation. They are founders of Churches, breakers of new soil, men of a missionary spirit who build not on other mens foundations, but dig out for themselves.

We need many such deliverers of the Good News where as yet the message has not been heard. I scarcely know of any greater blessing to the Church than the sending forth of earnest, indefatigable, anointed men of Godtaught of the Lord to be winners of souls. Who among us can estimate the value of George Whitfield to the age in which he lived? Who shall ever calculate the price of a John Williams or a William Knibb? Whitfield was, under God, the salvation of our country, which was going down straight to pandemonium.

Williams reclaimed the islands of the sea from cannibalism, and Knibb broke the Negros chains. Such Evangelists as these are gifts beyond all price. Then come the pastors and teachers, doing one work in different forms. These are sent to feed the flock. They abide in one place, and instruct converts which have been gatheredthese also are invaluable gifts of the Ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not given unto all men to be pastors, nor is it needed. For if all were shepherds, where were the flock? Those to whom this Divine Grace is especially given are fitted to lead and instruct the people of God, and this leading is much required.

What would the Church be without her pastors? Let those who have tried to do without them be a warning to you. Wherever you have pastors or Evangelists they exist for the good of the Church of God. They ought to labor for that end, and never for their own personal advantage. Their power is their Lords gift, and it must be used in His way. The point I want to come at is thisDear Friends, since we all, as Believers, have some measure of the Spirit, let us USE it! Stir up the gift that is in you! Be not like he in the parable who had but one talent and hid it in a napkin.

Brother, Sister, if you are in the body the least known joint, rob not the body by indolence or selfishness, but use the gift you have in order that the body of Christ may come to its perfection! And if you do not have great personal gifts, serve the Church by praying to the Lord who has ascended to give us more Evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He, alone, can give them! Any that come without Him are imposters.

There are some prayers you must not praythere are others you may praybut there are a few you must pray. There is a petition which Christ has commanded us to offer, and yet I very seldom hear it. It is this one Pray you, therefore, the Lord of the Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest. We greatly lack Evangelists and pastors. I do not mean that we lack muffs who occupy the pulpits and empty the pews. I believe the market has for many years been sufficiently supplied with those! But we lack men who can stir the heart, arouse the conscience, and build up the Church.

The scatterers of flocks may be found everywhere. The gatherers of themhow many have we of such? Such a man at this day is more precious than the gold of Ophir. The Queen can make a bishop of the Established Church, but only the ascended Lord can send a bishop to the

true Church. Prelates, popes, cardinals, vicars, prebends, canons, deansthe Lord has nothing to do with these! I see not even the name of them in His Wordbut the very poorest pastor whom the Lord ordains is a gift of His ascending Glory.

At this moment we are deploring that in the mission field our good men are gray. Duff, Moffat and the like are passing from the stage of action. Where are their successors? I was almost about to say, Echo answers, Where? We want Evangelists for India, for China, for all the nations of the earth. And though we have many godly fathers among us who are instructors in the faith, yet have we in all our pastorates few of eminence who could be mentioned in the same day as the great Puritanical Divines.

If the ministry should become weak and feeble among us, the Church richly deserves it, for this, the most important part of her whole organization, has been more neglected than anything else. I thank God this Church has not only prayed for ministers, but has proved the sincerity of her prayer by helping such as God has calledby affording them leisure and assistance for understanding the way of God more perfectly. We have thought that Christs gifts were valuable enough for us to treasure up and improve them.

Our College has now received and sent forth, in the name of Jesus Christ, more than two hundred ministers of the Word of God. Look around you and see how few churches care to receive the ascension gifts of Christ, and how few pastors encourage young men to preach. I read the other day, with unutterable horror, the complaint that our churches were likely to have too many ministers! That is an almost blasphemous complaintimpugning the value of Christs Ascension gifts! O that God would give us ten times the number of men after His own heart, and surely there would be then a great lack of more!

But there are too many, say they, for the present pulpits. Oh, miserable Soul, is it come to thisthat a minister of Christ must have a pulpit ready at hand? Are we all to be builders on other mens foundations? Have we none among us who can gather their own flocks? In a city of three million like this, can any man say that laborers for Christ are too many? Loiterers are too many, doubtless! And when the Church drives out the drones, who shall pity them? While there remain hundreds of towns and villages without a Baptist Church, and whole districts of other lands without the Gospel, it is idle to dream that of Evangelists and pastors we can have too many!

No man is so happy in his work as he who presides over a flock of his own gathering, and no pastor is more beloved than he who raised from ruin a destitute Church and made it to become a joy and praise in the earth! Pray the Lord to send true pastors and true Evangelists. Christ procured them by His Ascension. Let us not forget this. What? Shall it be thought that the blessings of the Crucifixion are worth the having, and

the blessings of the Resurrection worth receiving, but the blessings of the Ascension are to be regarded with indifference or even with suspicion?

No! Let us prize the gifts which God gives by His Son, and when He sends us Evangelists and pastors, let us treat them with loving respect. Honor Christ in every true ministersee not so much the man as his Master in him. Trace all Gospel success to the ascended Savior. Look to Christ for more successful workers. As they come, receive them from His hands. When they come, treat them kindly as His gifts, and daily pray that the Lord will send to Zion mighty champions of the faith.

IV. We shall conclude by noticing THE BEARING OF OUR LORDS ASCENSION UPON SINNERS. We will utter few words, but full of comfort. Did you notice in the sixty-eighth Psalm the wordsHe received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also? When the Lord went back to His Throne He still had thoughts of love towards rebels. The spiritual gifts of the Church are for the good of the rebels as well as for the building up of those who are reconciled.

Sinner, every true minister exists for your good, and all the workers of the Church have an eye to you! There are one or two promises connected with our Lords Ascension which show His kindness to youI, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. An ascended Savior draws yourun after Him! Here is another word of HisHe is exalted on high. To curse? No! To give repentance and remission of sins. Look up to the Glory into which He has enteredask for repentance and remission. Do you doubt His power to save you? Here is another textHe is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

Surely He has gone to Heaven for you as well as for the saints! You ought to take good heart, and put your trust in Him at this happy hour. How dangerous it will be to despise Him! They who despised Him in His shame perished. Jerusalem became a field of blood because it rejected the despised Nazarene. What will it be to reject the King, now that He has taken to Himself His great power?

Remember that this same Jesus who is gone up to Heaven will so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. His return is certain, and your summons to His bar equally certain. But what account can you give if you reject Him? O come and trust Him this day! Be reconciled to Him lest He be angry, and you perish from the way while His wrath is kindled but a little. The Lord bless you, and grant you a share in His Ascension. Amen, and Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE Sermon Psalm 68. 1-19; Ephesians 4:1-16.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #2653 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HEAD AND THE BODY   
NO. 2653

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 17, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1882.

The head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body   
unto the edifying of itself in love.   
Ephesians 4:15, 16.

IF I had to preach fully and accurately upon all that is taught in this text, I would certainly need to deliver a course of sermons, say five or six at least! There is such a wonderful depth of meaning in these Inspired Words that I might keep on expounding them and all the while be as one who takes water out of the seaalways wondering that there is so much more left than I can possibly draw from it. One writer says that the sense of this passage is as compacted as the joints of which it speaks, and that remark is a very true one, for here we have thought compressed as by hydraulic pressure! There is any quantity of it packed into the smallest possible space.

Our translation of the words here used by the Apostle is not, in every point, absolutely accurate. I wonder whether one could be made that would be so? We would need a paraphrase rather than an exact rendering of the original, for such is the fullness of meaning that no one translation into our poor tongue could really convey all that the Holy Spirit intended to teach by the Greek words. They seem to totter and tremble beneath the burden of the massive thought they are meant to carry. I am, therefore, only going to preach a plain, simple sermon upon the passage as it appears in our Authorized Version, which, though it is not strictly and literally correct in this case, is, at any rate, quite according to the analogy of the faithand can be abundantly supported by other passages of Scripture of similar import.

Turning to the text, we find that the Apostle was very anxious that the saints at Ephesus should be knit together, like the different parts of one body. Unity is not an easy thing to attain. Have you found it so in your own family? In many large families and even in small ones, there are sometimes most unfortunate jars and disagreementsand it is a happy household, indeed, that is wholly joined together as one body. Look at the world in general, in its various corporations, societies and associations, and see what disunion and discord are manifested everywhere! Half the newspapers are occupied with reports of the squabbles in the different vestries, or in the big vestry that meets in the House of Commonsor the other one that assembles in the House of Lords. I suppose we would scarcely be men if we always agreed on all points. Certainly, there is plenty of division among us. We seem to remember the Tower of Babel and the dispersion, for our tongues are still confounded and we misunderstand one another! And what is more criminal, we often misrepresent one another and we are all too apt to forget our Lords Words, It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

Paul was most anxious to have the Ephesian Church thoroughly knit together. And the chapter from which our text is taken is all about unity and how to maintain it. With his manacled hands, the prisoner of the Lord writes to beseech them to be truly oneto walk worthy of the vocation by which they were all called by the one Spirit of God. He entreats them, with all lowliness, meekness and long-suffering, to bear and to forbear with one another in love. He most touchingly and tenderly pleads his own imprisonment as an argument with them to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. By the remembrance of my bonds, he seems to say, put yourselves into the blessed bonds of brotherly love. And then he adds, There is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Both in the inward creed and the outward confession of it they were all onethey were not divided on these pointsso he begged them to be divided in nothing, especially as he was able to assure them that they had one God and Father, above all, through all and in alland one Christ, the Savior of all!

When he reminded them that He who ascended up on high is the same Jesus who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, I think he intended to remind them of the continuity of the work of Christthat it was the same Christ who both descended and ascended. There was no change in the Worker, for the one work was worked by the one Person, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Why, then, should we split up, divide and hold a hundred opinions as if Christ were divided? Paul tells us that when He ascended on high, He gave all sorts of officers that were necessary for His ChurchApostles, Prophets, Evangelists and so onall for this purposefor the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is this that the Apostle aimed atthat the saints should be one in Christ Jesus and then, remembering that one very frequent cause of division is the instability of many minds, he urged them to be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

But that they might know what they believed and not be driven away from it with every puff of wind. That they might not be misled and deceived by the sleight of men, by cleverness, by magicians who spirit the Truth of God awayas so many religious tricksters are continually doing nowadays, establishing lies and overthrowing the Truth by their magical deceptionPaul seems to allude to the casting of dice when he speaks of the sleight of men. And I am afraid that there are many people whose religion comes to them according to what they call, luck. They happened to be born on a certain street and their parents attended a particular place of worship, so they believed what was taught there. But if the dice had fallen in some other way, they might have been Muslims, or Mormons, or Roman Catholics, or God knows what, for they have not any solid reasons for believing what they are supposed to believe! They hold it, as it were, by a kind of chance and they are quite ready to let it go if chance should so arrange.

The Apostle beseeches us to guard against this evil and to hold fast the faith, to be established in it and to know why we believe it, so that, speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Christ, who is the one and only Head of the Church and to whom every living member is vitally joined. Every man who is indeed, saved, is a part of Christs mystical body and he is to develop in harmony with the growth of the entire body until he and every other one joined with him in the living structure shall attain to the stature of a perfect manthe whole Church with its Head, Christ Jesus, becoming Gods mystic, perfect man to be glorified forever and ever!

You see, dear Friends, that even when I am only trying to introduce this great subject to you, I am overwhelmed with the vastness of it! There is a mint of meaning. There are masses of un-coined bullion in the heavenly treasury to which the Apostle brings us! It is impossible for me to set forth all the spiritual wealth which is revealed here, but I shall endeavor to point out four things which are brought to our notice in the text. First, our union to Christ the Head. Secondly, our individuality every jointevery part. Thirdly, our relationship to each otherjoined togetherthat which every joint supplies. And, lastly, our compact unity in the one Church of Jesus Christ makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

I. First, then, Beloved, I have to speak to you concerning OUR UNION TO CHRIST. We cannot do better than begin with this great Truth of Godthat Christ is the Head of His Church.

Hence, we learn, first, that union with Christ is essential to the life of His Church. Men sometimes lose a foot, or a leg, or an arm, or an eye, or an ear. It is very remarkable how a man may continue to exist after he has lost several of his limbs, but he cannot live if his head is taken away. Cut that off and the decapitated body is dead in an instant! So, Brothers and Sisters, the Church of God lives because Christ lives and its life is entirely derived from Him. If there were no Christ, there would be no Church. And if there is, anywhere, a body of professors without vital union to Christ, they are not a church! They may have the name of a church, but they are assuredly dead! The Spirit of God flows through Christ into the whole of His true Church, permeating every part of His wonderful mystical body. But the Spirit of God is first on the Head and in the Headand then from Him the gracious unction of the Holy One descends to the entire body. Ask yourselves, dear Friends, whether you are joined to Christ. Do you belong to that Church which is really one in Christthe true Catholic and Apostolic Church? By Catholic, of course, I mean universalthe one and only Church of the living God! All who are in Christ belong to His Church, but those who are out of Christ are outside the pale of His Church and if there is a church that is not in Him, it is not Christs Church at all! So you see that union with Christ is essential to the life of His Church.

Next, union with Christ is essential to the growth of His Church. Christs Church must grow. We, as a Church, must seek continually to increase. A living Church is not like the building in which it meetsthe material structure may never be enlargedbut if the Church is a living one, it keeps on growing. The true Church of Christ in the world is always advancing and multiplying. As the Apostle says, in our text, it makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. But, Beloved, there is no edification except that which comes from Christ! He is the Churchs true Teacher. He is the great Master Builder and it is by Him that the whole spiritual building is fitly joined together. We try to preach those Truths of God which are the nutriment of mens souls, but they do not nourish them because they come from usthey only nourish them as they come from Christ! If you want to grow in Divine Grace, you must get from Christ all that is necessary for your growth. Do not think that Christ begins the great work and then leaves you to finish it. Oh, no! He makes us alive and He keeps us alive. He strengthens and develops the life that He has givenall its force and power must come from Him. Need I remind you of this? Yes, for I find it necessary to remind myself and, therefore, I judge that I must also stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Not a step heavenward, not in the least likeness to God, not to the smallest degree of holiness can you proceed apart from Jesus Christ your Head! Never forget this fact, simple though it is.

Further, union to Christ our Head is also essential to our perfection. Will a time ever come when a saint will be perfect in himself, apart from Christ? Never, for we are only perfect in Christ Jesus, or, as the Apostle puts it, You are complete in Him. Shall I ever get to be so holy that I can stand before God without my Mediator? Shall I ever have a spiritual beauty of my own which shall render the imputed righteousness of Christ unnecessary for me? Never! For even in our highest estate in Heaven, we shall still need to have our vital union with Christ perpetually maintained. He is the Head of the Church triumphant as well as of the Church militant! He will forever be the Head of the Church made perfect as surely as He is the Head of His poor, weak, feeble, but evergrowing Church on earth!

Remember one more point, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and that is that union to Christ the Head is essential to every member of His Churchnot only is it essential to the body as a whole, but to every member of that body in detail. It is no use for my little finger to have unity with my hand and my arm if that arm is not united to my body, and my body is not united to my head. So each Believer must be personally joined to Christ. Whether he is only comparable to a little finger, or is like the strong bone of the leg, he must equally be joined to the Head the smallest member of the mystical body of Christ cannot live apart from the Head, nor can the largest member. All alike, both great and small, comely and uncomely, manifest or concealed, must draw their life from Christ the Head! You must do so, my Brother or my Sister in Jesus, and so must Ilet us always keep this great Truth of God in memorya church that is only united in itself, but not united to Christ, is no living church at all.

You may attain to the unity of the frost-bound earth in which men and women are frozen together with the cold proprieties of aristocracy, but it is not the unity of life! Or you may get the union of mere worldly enthusiasm in which men are fused together like molten metal, but the fire, if it is not of God, though it creates a certain sort of unity, creates not that living union which God designs and effects. The one all-important question for each of us is, Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, there is between my soul and my Savior a living, loving, lasting union. And if we all love Him, then Christ loves all of us, and we are living in Christ and Christ is living in usand this is that marvelous miracle of union between the Divine and the human which, when men see it, are astonished! They cannot see the union itself, but they can behold its effects, as our Lord said, By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love, one to another. This was Christs prayer for us, for in that great intercessory supplication of His, He pleaded, first, for His immediate followers and then He added, Neither pray I for these, alone, but for them, also, who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they, also, may be one in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

That is the first point in the text, and a very essential one, our union to Christ the Head.   
II. From that I want to lead you, Beloved, as best I can, to the consideration of the second point, which is OUR INDIVIDUALITY.   
The Apostle speaks of every joint and every part. We are many as well as one and it is a great Grace of God when men and women merge their individuality in the community of which they form a part. Remember, dear Friends, that you, by yourselves, are not the Church and you must not always keep on saying, we, if you are not doing anything at all in connection with it! You are yourself and you must look upon yourself as a distinct individualyour first care, in the sight of Godmust be concerning yourself. The body is made up of many bones, sinews, muscles, veins, arteries and so on, and each one has its special place and function. And each of you has a particular position and office in the corporate body which is called by the name of the Church.   
Think of your individuality and think of it thus. See that you are really united to the body. It does not matter how beautiful a member may be if it is not in the body, for it is not where it ought to beand it is not where it will be of any service. There is an eye which has just been taken from a dead body. It lies on the operating tablewhat will you give for it? It is worth nothing and it must be put out of sight, for it is of no use. There is a finely-formed ankle, but it is useless apart from the rest of the body. How beautiful that leg is! Yes, but as it is not joined to a body, you must bury it out of sight. Now mark particularly what I am going to say and if any of you are wicked enough to misrepresent my words, on you will be the responsibility. This is what I sayNobody can possibly have spiritual life unless he is joined to the Church. Oh, somebody says, Mr. Spurgeon said that people had no spiritual life unless they were members of his church. He did not say anything of the kind and he never thought anything of the sort! But he means that they must be members of the Baptist Church. He does not mean anything of the sort! Oh, but he means that they must be members of some visible church! Well, we would have to talk a little while about that matter, but I did not say that and I did not mean it!   
I believe that every Christian ought to be joined to some visible Churchthat is his plain duty according to the Scriptures. Gods people are not dogs, otherwise they might go about one by one. They are sheep and, therefore, they should be in flocks. If I meet a man all by himself, snapping at everybodyI may be called uncharitable, but, I should hardly think that he was a sheepI would be afraid that he was a dog. But when I see a man who consorts with his fellow men, feeds with them, takes delight in their company and with them draws near to the Great Shepherd of Souls, I say to myself, I think he must be one of the sheep, for that is the way in which that animal always acts. So, Beloved, you should go in flocks or companiesthat is to say, you should be joined to some Christian Church.   
But I was speaking just now of the Church. There is a Church which is the Church of Christ. I see it not, but it is visible to Him who bought it with His precious blood. The members of that Church are scattered up and down throughout all the world. Some are in this Church, some are in other churches, but Christ is causing that Church to grow up for Himself from the girlhood state, in which she now is, till she shall come to the measure of the perfect stature of what God designs her to be when she is ready to become the bride, the Lambs wife. This Church, chosen before all worlds, redeemed upon the Cross, quickened, fashioned and called out by degrees by the Holy Spirit and united to Christ, is the one of which you and I must be members, or else we shall be lost forever! See to it, then, dear Friends, that you are vitally joined to Christs Church and specially that you are united to Him who is the Head of it.   
Next, we must be careful to find and keep our true position in that body. I call your attention to a point which may not seem to be as important as it really is. A body owes its beauty, comfort, healthfulness, happiness perhaps its very lifeto the position of the different members of which it is composed. Any book on anatomy will teach you that this is the case. There is no other place where our eyes could be but just where God has fixed them. Try whether you can find another position where your eyes could be so fitted for their work as where they now are. Our feet, with which we walk, are the best members to walk with and they are put in the proper place for that purpose. Suppose they were attached to our shoulders and we had to walk with them? I do not know how we would manage it. And if our hands were where our feet now are, it would be exceedingly awkward and difficult for us to use them. We would, indeed, be monstrosities rather than men if any part of us should be shifted from its present position! When men write romances about mythical beings, they describe hideous creatures whose heads are under their arms, or like the fabled Cyclops, with one eye in the middle of his foreheadbut Christs Church is not a monstrosity! Mind that you do not act as though you thought that she was.   
Try, dear Friends, to be in the body of Christ what you were meant to be. I have known some men who were very eager to preach. They have had wonderful gifts of dispersion, but no power to gather or hold a congregation together. They have fomented a quarrel within a month and split up the church into fragments in order to purge it from some fancied eviland they have purged it till there is nobody left in it! They think that it is the wickedness of men which makes hearers unwilling to listen to them, whereas it is only their own folly. They, who might have been useful as ears, listening to somebody else, are altogether useless as a tongue! Do not get out of your position, Brother, if you are already in it. But if not, get into your right place as soon as you can and do there what the Lord would have you do. Some persons have a very great gift of finding fault with other people, but I do not know any place that God has arranged in the body for that particular faculty! It is a kind of disease or, rather, an evil spirit which needs to be cast out! If you who are thus afflicted would try to do something, yourselves, you would perhaps discover that while it is exceedingly easy to complain of others, it is more difficult to do your own work in such a way that people cannot justly find fault with you! Do, dear Friends, seek to have every joint and every part in their right place. Let every ligament and tendon of the body be just where it should be. If we were to put the doors of our houses where the windows now areand to put the roof where the foundation stones are, we should have very strange housesand you will not find a true Church of Christ unless every part of it is in its right place according to Gods order and arrangement.   
A third thing about our individuality is that every part of the body should be careful of its own health. If I happen to be only like a little finger in the body of the Church, it is a great pity that I should be ill, for the whole body will be affected. If my little finger is full of some evil complaint, it may cause great inconvenience to my whole system. Did you ever have a splinter in your hand and yet the rest of your body did not know that anything was the matter? Instead of that being the case, your finger has been of greater consequence to you than all the other parts of your body when it has once begun to smart and to be full of painand to swell and fester! Now, you little members, you can do any quantity of mischief if you like. It is possible for a Christian to have so little Grace, and so much sin, that he may cause pain to the entire Church of God. for people will point to the most obscure of you if you do wrong! They will say, That is one of the people that go to the Tabernacle and no doubt they are all alike.   
It is very unjust to say that we are all like the worst person we have among us. If we have one especially godly and gracious member, the world never says, They are all like he. No, no! They say, Ah, he is quite an exception! If they were all like he, then we would go there, too. But they take as their standard and test the most sickly and unhealthy in the whole flock. Therefore, I pray you, dear members of this Church, ask God to make each one of you healthy in spiritual things. Do not think you are of no importance. Never belittle yourself by saying, It does not matter whether I pray, or whether I live near to God. It does matter, Brothers and Sisters, for it may give some of us the greatest pain if we see you behaving unworthily or living inconsistently with your profession. Therefore let your individuality lead you to see, first, that you are in the Church. Next, that you are in your right position in the Church. And then, that you are a healthy member of the Church, which is Christs body.   
And, once more, be careful of your growth for the sake of the whole body. Oh, you say, I do not know that I need to grow! I have believed in Christ and I am savedthat is enough for me. But, my dear Friend, you must grow because the whole Church of Christ is to grow! Suppose that, when I was a lad, one of the bones of my arm had persisted in not growing. If all the rest of my body had been properly developedwhat would happen if that particular bone did not grow? Why, I would have a short arm! Suppose that one of the bones of your leg had said to itself, I am in the body and that is enough for me! I do not mean to grow any more. You would have had to go hopping through the world with one short leg all your lifeand that would have been a very uncomfortable thing for youyou would probably have had great pain as well as inconvenience. So, if one Christian in the Church does not grow, he will give trouble to others, for the next Brother to him is growing and it makes matters very awkward when some advance and others do not. I would like to have a Church composed of effective soldiersbut I suppose that I shall never have that. Usually we have a certain number of lame folk among us.

We cannot leave them behind, yet they cannot fight in our ranks. We cannot do as Gideon did with his followerssend the faint-hearted ones home. No, they will stay with us and their inefficiency cuts off a certain number of those who would be good for fighting, for they are so ill that they need somebody to wait upon them and, perhaps, a third of the Church has to be employed in driving the ambulances and attending to the invalids. Then, when the battle begins to get hot and we need all our regiments to the front, there is a certain number of soldiers who cannot stand firethey turn their backs and so bring shame upon the Church. I wish it were not so, yet it often is because all are not of one heart and one soulthere is not the living unity that there ought to be, for then all would grow at the same rate and the body, growing harmoniously, would be strong and beautifuland in the day of conflict it would be able to vanquish the foe. Look, then, to this matter, each one of you. Laggards, come on! You that have been slothful, quicken your pace! You that have been sick and weary, may God restore and refresh you, so that the whole body may be healthy and vigorous. So much, then, about our union to Christ and our individuality.   
III. Now for a few words about OUR RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER.   
The Apostle says a good deal here about jointsThat which every joint supplies. That expression conveys the idea of relationship and teaches us that we are, in our desire and spirit, to be fitted to work with others. This bone is so wisely constructed at this end that it fits into the next one and thus both work together. Our joints are very amazing things. This wrist joint is, perhaps, the most wonderful piece of mechanism in the world! The bones fit into each other so beautifully and work together so harmoniously. I know some Brothers who would make splendid men if all the rest of the people were dead, for they are very loving and amiable to themselves. They would be just the sort of folk to become hermitsshut them up in a cave with a bucket of water and a loaf of breadand all their virtues would shine out! They have taken the motto which our Scotch friends link with the thistle and which I might freely translateNobody shall touch me without catching it. Whoever comes near them, they are always upon their guard. They are sure that person means them no good, so they repel his advances at once.   
When we get such people as that into a Christian Church, it is very awkward for the rest of the members. It is as if we had bones in our body without any joints to themthey grate against each other and constantly wear each other away when they come into contact. Now, dear Friend, if you are in a Church, try to make yourself a bearable person as far as you can. Keep your own peculiarities, if they are worth retaining, yet do not display them so as to make yourself obnoxious! And do not let everybody, or even anybody, if you can help it, be obnoxious to you. Perhaps you have some bone joints outside of youif so, then pray God to make those joints fit into the persons that happen to be near you. In this wondrously complex body of Christ, we need to be jointed all over so that we may, in our various relationships, be to others just what Christ would have us to be!   
Next, notice that the Apostle says that there is something which every joint supplies. So there is. Every joint supplies oil and if there were not any, it might be very awkward for the rest of the system. In the Church of Christ, which is His body, we need the joint oil of love. If you are traveling by railway, you will see, when an express train pulls up, that a man goes round and puts fresh grease into the box to keep the wheels from firing. What a wonderful machine our body is, for it puts the grease into its own box and keeps all the joints right without friction by supplying them with its own oil! There are some Brothers and Sisters, with whom I come in contact, who expect me to find all the joint oil for them, but even then they are often very trying. Yet I must not lose my temper, or be at all hard with them! Well, I can supply the oil for my own joints, but you must put the oil into yours, or else we cannot work well together.   
Perhaps someone says that there is no love in the Church. Quite right, Brother. You mean that there is none in you! Your bones have no joint oil. But if you had your own measure of holy, hearty love to your Brothers and Sisters, I believe that you would find that some oil would exude out of them, for there are none of the bones of Christs body that are quite dry. There is some oil in them all, although you may not know how to get at it. And some bodies that are called strange are so reckoned because, perhaps, they are better than we are. But if we could get at them in the right way, we would find them to be full of love and we would rejoice that we knew them. Do let every joint, therefore, take care to supply its oil when it comes into contact with the next bone.   
In this way, we would aid the compactness of the body. That is the expression in our textcompacted by that which every joint supplies. When all the bones work well together, they greatly assist the compactness of the body, for the muscles, tendons and so forth bind the whole together. The bones of the body are its strength and give it compactnessand so strengthen certain other parts of the system that are soft and would give way if left to themselves. So, in every Church, when there is bad doctrine preached, there are certain pieces of flesh that seem to give way under the heretical touch. Yes, but you who are like the sturdy, stiff old bones that do not give way, you must just stand firm and steadfast in the faith, whatever is preached! Stand fast by the Truth of God under all opposition, for so you will give compactness and stability to the entire Church! I pray that we may always have, in this Christian community, a number of godly men and matrons who know what they know, so that when the younger sort are a little perplexed, they may go to them and say, Tell us, dear Brothers and Sisters, are we right or wrong on these matters? And they will say, We have tasted and handled the good old Doctrines of Grace and we are afraid that you will go quite off the right lines if you accept these new notions. Therefore, cleave to the Truth which you have received. That is the way that the Church is made strong, by all the joints ministering the oil which holds it together, or helps to the harmonious working of allthe bones being themselves confirmed while strengthening others.   
Besides that, let every member offer his own services to the Church. Let each one be doing what he or she can. No one minister, no 20 ministers, no elders, if there were a hundred, no deacons, if there were a thousand, could ever fulfill all the ministries of the Church! God has given Apostles, Evangelists, pastors, teachers and so forth to bring the Bread of Life to us. That is the outward feeding of the flock, but, then, each living person must take the food into himselfthe Church must edify itself. There must go on, within the Church, the proper processes of digestion and assimilation of the Truth of God, the reception of and yielding to the Spirit of God by which the Church is built up by itself, as well as by all the external influences which God has prepared for its strengthening and increase.   
IV. Now I must close, for our time has gone, by only a few sentences concerning OUR COMPACT UNITY AS A CHURCH.   
The Church of God should be one, but not piled into one heap. It should be one in Christ Jesus by a living union. May I ask each one of you whether it is so? Is the life of God in you, dear Brother, dear Sister? If it is and you feel that it is the same life which is in the other members, then you have a unity of the most indestructible kindone which never can be broken! This union must be a growing union. We ought so to grow continually as to love each other better and bear with each other more and more. It is often my prayer for this Church, when I am anxiously thinking of the great work here, that nothing may ever arise to divide us in spirit and in love to each other. It is, to my mind, a standing miracle that all these years [Almost 30 years.EO.] we have been bound together in the unity of the Spirit and in the bonds of peace. But, for the years that are yet to come, shall we quarrel with one another? Shall there be a root of bitterness to spring up and trouble us? I see no trace or sign of it at present, but before it does appear, I beg of you, by the years in which we have worked together, by the blessings we have been made to see, by the benefits which God has given to thousands of souls by this Church, let us not tear this garment of Christ, let us not do anything in any way by which our union may be marred. But let us be compacted by that which every joint supplies.   
I may be speaking to some friends who are a little out of temper with a Brother or Sister. Go and settle the difficulty at once. Resolve in your heart that you will settle it tonight if possible. If you have any disagreements, if there is any coldness at all between you, before you come to this Table, bury it all! Get closer to Christ and then get closer to one anotherand may our blessed Lord, when He comes, find us all one in Him! We ask it for His dear names sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**1 PETER 1:1-12.**

Verses 1, 2. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. How sweetly the Apostle is obeying his Masters command, When you are converted, strengthen your brethren. This is the same Peter who once began to sink beneath the waves, yet now he is helping others to stand! This is the very Peter who denied his Master, but he begins his Epistle by acknowledging himself to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ. What wonders the Lord Jesus had worked for Peter by His Grace! It is no marvel, therefore, that he should say to others, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And, truly, this is a blessing beyond all comparison or imagination, that we have been begotten again by the Divine Father unto a living hope, for that is a better rendering than, lively. Our first birth brought us into sin and sorrow, but our second birth brings us into purity and joy. We were born to dienow are we born never to die, begotten again unto a life that shall remain in us forevermorea life which shall even penetrate these mortal bodies and make them immortal, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

4, 5. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Joy, my Brothers and Sisters, in the glorious inheritance which is prepared for youunstained, uncorrupted, perfectly pure and, therefore, to last forever because the elements which produce decay are not in it! It is without sin and, therefore, it shall be without end. What a mercy it is to be kept by the power of God! See, Heaven is kept for us and we are kept for Heaven! Heaven is prepared for us and we are prepared for Heaven! There is a double action of Gods Grace thus working in us and working for us unto eternal bliss!

6. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Or trials. Some people cannot comprehend how a man can greatly rejoice and yet be in heaviness at the same time. But there are many things, in a Christians experience, that cannot be understood except by those who experience them! And even they find many a mystery which can only be expressed by a paradox. There are some who think that Gods people should never be heavy in spirit, but the Apostle says, Now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness. He does not say, If need be, you are in manifold trials, but, If need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials, for the need be is as much for the depressed spirit as for the trials themselves.

7, 8. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And does not the joy agree well with the Object of it? Paul said, Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. And Peter, speaking of the same Savior, says, In whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

9-11. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find in the Bible a Truth which you cannot quite comprehend? You ought not to marvel, for even the Prophets, who prophesied of the Grace which has come to us, did not always fully understand their own messages! I am sure that their Inspiration was verbal because the Inspired men frequently did not, themselves, know the meaning of what they were moved to write.

12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you which the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. See the kind of preaching that we should all desire to hear and that all Gods ministers should aim at? Them that have preached the Gospel unto you which the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven. Nothing but a Gospel full of the energy of the Holy Spirit and set on fire by Him can effect the eternal purposes of God! And this is the kind of preaching that will live and that will also make men live! God send it to every Church and congregation throughout the world! Amen.

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NO. 2719

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 24, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 1880.

But you have not so learned Christ, if, indeed, you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. Ephesians 4:20, 21.

THE first two words of our text call attention to the distinction which must always be drawn between true Christians and other people, But you. The Apostle had been writing concerning other Gentiles and the evil lives they lived, so, to the Believers at Ephesus, he said that they were not to walk as unbelievers ordinarily did. Thus we learn at the very opening of our subject that if we are, indeed, Christians, there is a manifest distinction between us and the men of the world. I may be told that, of course, there was a great contrast between Christs followers and the heathen who lived in the Apostles day. And some persons will, perhaps, say that we cannot expect that there should now be the same difference between Christian men and unbelievers. I reply that there may be a variation as to the outward form of that contrast, but, essentially, it must be quite as true and real.

Someone was asking, the other day, how it was that the church, nowadays, was not so separate from the world as it used to be, and one who heard the question suggested that, possibly, the world had grown better. But someone more truly said that, probably, the church had grown worse. There are two ways of our coming togetherthe world may rise to our proper height, or we may descend to the worlds level. Well, now, I am quite certain that candor requires us to say that, in some respects, the condition of society is much better than it was. There are some of the grosser vices which were common enough 50 years ago, which are now held in general reprobation. To a very considerable extent, Christianity has leavened society. Men are not, as a rule, so coarsely vicious as they were in the days of our grandfathers, yet after making all the abatement I possibly can on that score, I cannot help feeling that the difference between the church and the world has been mainly changed by the church coming down from what it used to be! I wish we were as liable to be called fanatics as the first Methodists were simply because men judged us to be as earnest as they were. I would be glad if we were as worthy to be called Puritans as were the men of the days of Dr. John Owen and Oliver Cromwell. For my part, I think that, nowadays, we are not Puritan enough, or precise enough and, without any hesitation, we may make the assertion, which we are sure Gods Word will support, that whatever improvements there may be in the world, there must always be a marked distinction between the children of God and the seed of the serpent! There can never be a time in which death and life will be exactly alike, nor a season in which darkness will be the same thing as light. We must still, to the end of the chapter, be either born of God, born from above, or else continue to lie under the power of Satan. We must either be dead in trespasses and sins or else be quickened by Divine Grace. We must either have passed from natures darkness into Gods marvelous light, or else we are still abiding in that darkness!

You must also remember, my Brothers and Sisters, whoever you may be, that if there is no distinction between you and the world around you, you may be certain that you are of the world, for, in the children of God there must always be some marks to distinguish them from the rest of mankind so that we can contrast them with the ungodly, and address to them the words of our text, But you have not so learned Christ. There is a something in them which is not to be found in the best worldling. Something which is not to be discovered in the most admirable carnal man. A something in their character which can be readily perceived and which marks them as belonging to another and higher racethe twiceborn, the elect of God, eternally chosen by Him and, therefore, made to be choice ones through the effectual working of His Grace. Note this fact at the very commencement of our meditation, that there is a clear distinction between Christians and all other people.

Further, it appears from the text that the great means of this distinction is our being made into disciples to be taught of God, for the Apostle says, But you have not so learned Christ. So that it is something which we have learned that makes us different from the rest of mankind. In our spiritual life, the first essential is conversion. This great change is like the turning of the helm which makes the boat head up in a new direction. But conversion is not everything. After the boat is turned, it has to be rowed, or else it will drift down the stream. If a man becomes Christs disciple by conversion, he must remain Christs disciple throughout the rest of his life by sitting at his Masters feet and receiving instruction from Him, for it is only as we are taught of God that we shall be able to keep up the high spiritual distinction between ourselves and the rest of mankind. We are under the tutorship of the Holy SpiritHe has taken us into His schoolHe has already taught us somethingHe is now teaching us more and He will keep on teaching us more and more till we shall know even as we are known.

I want, at this time, as His Divine power rests upon me, to try to speak a little, first, upon

our lesson. You have not so learned Christ. Secondly, I will say something upon how we have not learned that lesson. You have not so learned Christ. And then, thirdly, I wi1l endeavor to tell you how we have learned it. We have learned it in this fashionIf, indeed, you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

I. First, then, we are to think about THE CHRISTIANS LESSON. You have not so learned Christ.   
It is a very uncommon expression which the Apostle here employs, for it is not usual to learn a person, yet Paul says, You have not so learned Christ, by which he did not mean merely learning the doctrine of Christ. Many a man knows what Christ taught and yet has not learned Christ. He has read the Bible. He may even have studied it, after a fashion, and may know what orthodox doctrine is so that he does not care to hear any otherhe could stand up and tell you very correctly what the teachings of Jesus Christ are, yet he has not learned Christ. It is quite right that we should learn the teachings of Christ and value every word that He has spoken. Still, that is not the main lesson that the Christian has to learn.   
Nor is it merely learning Christs precepts, for we might learn them all and yet not have learned the one lesson that is essential to our Christian lifeto learn Christ. Some men are very earnest, and rightly so, to learn all the ceremonies that Christ has taught us. There are not many of those ceremonies and people make great mistakes concerning them, notwithstanding their earnest zeal to be correct. But, supposing a man should know all about Believers Baptism and the Lords Supper, according to their Scriptural mode and meaningstill, that is not the lesson spoken of in the text! Neither doctrines, nor precepts, nor ordinances will suffice as the life-lesson of a Christianit is the blessed Person of our Lord that we must learn!   
Paul also meant a great deal more than merely learning about Christ. I think the distinction will readily strike you. A man may know much about Christwhose Son He is, what work He came to do, what He is still doing and what He will yet do at His glorious appearinghe may have sufficient understanding about Christ to be able to be a teacher of others and to be reckoned a theologian. And yet, for all this, he may never have learned Christ. That is quite another thing. I know much about many people as far as their history can be known by a stranger to them, yet I do not know them. I have never spoken to them, I have never even seen them. There are many persons, I am sure, of whom you can truly say that you know everything that can be known about them, for their whole career in so well known and you have been told so much concerning themyet you do not know them. To use Pauls word, you have never learned them. Beware, then, of being satisfied with knowing about Christ, for the life-lesson of a Christian is to know Himto learn Him. What does this mean?   
It means, first, that you and I must know Him as a personal Christ. We must know Him as being a real Savior, actually existing, to whom we have come, with whom we have spoken and who has spoken to usand of whose existence we can have no doubt because we know Him and are known of Him. It does not mean that He is so little known to us that we can just detect and discover Him, but that we have so learned Him that we know Himknow His heart, know His voice, know that secret of the Lord which only He can reveal and which He tells to none but those who are truly His own. This is the very essence of true religionpersonally living with a personal Savior, personally trusting a personal Redeemer, personally crying out to a personal Intercessor and receiving personal answers from a Person who loves us and who manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. To many people, Christ is only a name to bow at, not a Person to embrace. To some, Christ is merely the name by which they designate their religion, such as it is. But to us, Beloved, I trust that He is much more than a namea living, bright reality, who abides with us and in whom we also abide.   
Next to this realization of His personality and the entering into communion with Him, learning Christ means knowing His Nature. As long as we have known Christ, we have known that He is Divine. Indeed, many of us knew that before we really and savingly knew Him. Since we were little children we never had any question about Jesus Christ being very God of very God and if anybody had called us Socinians or Unitarians, we would have been deeply grieved, because we always held the doctrine of His Divinity. But now we know that He is God, for His eternal power and Godhead have been proved in our spirit. He has taken away from us a mass of sin which none but God could have removed. He has breathed peace into us, even the peace of God which passes all understanding. He has helped us when we have been staggering under a burden too heavy for us to bearHe has borne it for us as none but God could have done. Our Lord Jesus has not only revealed Himself to us, but He has also made our true selves known to ourselves by that Omniscient power which dwells in none but God! And we have said to Him as emphatically as Thomas did when he put his finger into the print of the nails, My Lord and my God. I never care to read any arguments about the Deity of ChristI would as soon think of reading a book which sought to prove the existence of my mother! This is a matter which I know for myself. I have tried it and proved itand felt its power.   
As to the Humanity of Christ, beloved Friends, we always knew that He was Human. I suppose that none of us ever had a doubt about that as a matter of head knowledge, but now we know Him to be Human because we have been with Him. He has felt for us as none but a Brother born for adversity could feel. He has looked at us, sometimes, in our griefs, with such eyes as no angel ever had! And only such a wondrous Person as the Son of Mary, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, would have given us such a look as we have received from Him. And He has spoken home to our heart, words of such matchless tenderness as only one who was akin to us, and who had been tempted in all points like as we are could even have invented and uttered to us. Just as truly as we know Him to be God, we also know Him to be Man. It is not now to us a matter of only doctrineit is not a matter needing to be provedwe do not now desire even Scriptural proof, for we have seen Him, ourselves! We have spoken with Him personally and now we not only believe His Word, but our own heart has proved and tested beyond all question that He is EmmanuelGod With Us! I hope I have made plain the distinction between knowing doctrinally that Christ is God and Man, and personally learning Him in His combined Nature.   
The next part of the lesson we have to learn is to know Christ in His various offices. Did they not tell us, in our first Sunday school, that Christ is Prophet, Priest and King? Yes, and from our childhoods days we believed that He was all that. But now, Beloved, many of us know that He is a Prophet, for, as I have already observed, He has read our hearts and He has told us things that none but a Prophet of God could know. He has revealed the condition of our hearts to us. He has shown us our sins. He has discovered our needs and He has also supplied those needs and restored peace to us, and brought us to Himself, and revealed to us the Truth of God as we were able to bear it.   
We also have no question concerning His priesthood. We always did believe in it, but now we have learned it in another fashion. Not long ago some of us stood covered with filth from head to foot, and we heard one sing   
*There is a Fountain filled with blood,   
Drawn from Immanuels veins.   
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains*   
and we came to that Fountain and were plunged beneath that flood, and we lost all our guilty stains. By faith we saw the Lord Jesus as our great High Priest, standing at the altar, and offering Himself as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! And now that He has taken away our sins, and our conscience has a sweet rest, in a sense, of acceptance in the Beloved, we have learned Christs Priesthood not only out of the Book, but because the blood of His Atonement has been sprinkled upon us! God has seen the blood and has passed over us. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, has cleansed us from all sin. That blood has brought us near to God and, at this very hour, it is speaking to our heart better things than the blood of Abel ever spoke! And thus we have learned Christ as our Priest.   
It is the same with His Kingship. Some of us never doubted that Christ is a King. We were brought up to believe it, but, in a much higher sense, we feel Him to be our King now. We have bowed our willing neck to His gracious rule and we can feel Him reigning over our stubborn but subdued lusts which would never have been conquered, and we ourselves would never have been led into happy captivity except through His gracious Sovereignty. And now we rejoice that within our spirit we have learned Christ for ourselves, and we know Him as the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.   
Dear Hearers, can you follow me in all this? Do you know anything experimentally concerning what I have been saying? Perhaps some of you do notand that is not altogether surprising, for there is many a master of Israel, like Nicodemus, who knew not these things. It is one thing to be a fluent talker about theological truths, but it is quite another thing to know Christ personally, to lay hold of Him by faith so as to be able to say, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine; let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine. Where that declaration is true, there is more in it than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero! Doctors of divinity may know many things and yet not have learned Christ. But he who has learned Christ has been taught of God.

This blessed instruction will go still further, dear Friends, when we come to know Christ as to His Character. frequently I advise you all to read the life of Christ as it is recorded by the four Evangelists. That is the best, Life of Christ, that was ever written, or ever will be! And all the rest of the Lives of Christ might as well be burnt, for you can get a better idea of Christs life from the four Gospels than from all other books put together! If you read aright the life of Christ as it is recorded in the Inspired Word, you will be struck with it and delighted with it. And if you are a candid person, you must be charmed with it. But you will never truly learn it until God the Holy Spirit renews your own heart and teaches you to love itand makes you to be like Christ Himself was!   
A man has not learned writing till he can write, and a man has not fully learned Christ till he lives like Christand that fact puts many of us on a very low form in the school of the Divine Teacher. If a man wants to learn a trade, he will have to do a great deal beside walking in and out of a workshop and seeing how everybody else does certain things. He who properly learns a trade must learn it himself by practically working at it. And he who really learns Christs Character is the man who has Christs Characterthere is at least something of likeness to Christ about him. I hope I can say of many here present that they are learning Christ, and that they have learned Christ so that, in one point and another, there is something about you which should make men say, They have been with Jesusthey have learned Him. He who lies down in beds of spices will smell of their sweetness. And he who lives with Christ will soon catch the savor of Christ! This is what we are aiming atto learn how to write as Christ did, imitating both the upstrokes and the down strokes that are in the perfect copyto learn the trade and business of holiness after the manner in which Christ carried it on while here below! There will be, doubtless, many flaws and imperfections in our imitation of Him, but still, we shall have learned something of the sacred art of doing our Fathers business and giving ourselves up wholly to His Glory. I pray that we may all practically learn Christ in this way. When that comes to pass and we know the Character of Christ, we then come to know the sweet influences of Christs Person. Knowing Him, we see what charms there are in Him and what power He has over human beings under all manner of circumstances. Did you ever feel Christs power to break the heart? You have not learned Him till you know that, for He has a way of speaking in such loving tones that the heart seems broken all in pieces. Have you ever learned His power to heal the heart that He has broken? Do you know it for yourself? Has your poor broken spirit, bleeding from a thousand wounds, suddenly found an effectual remedy for its impending destruction and rested in peace? Oh, what charms there are in Christ to all true Christians! If you have ever really learned Him, you know how He can take you up out of the cold world where you are lying freezing at His door, and lift you right inside where the fire is brightly burningand fill you with intense delight!   
You know how, when you are creeping along the road, He can come and bear you up as on eagles wings and how, when you can scarcely stir a foot towards Heaven, He can, all of a sudden, make your soul like the chariots of Amminadib. Have you ever felt such raptures as Paul experienced when he was caught up to the third Heaven and did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body? Have you ever felt that influence of Christ which makes a mans life to become sublime and causes his every action to become something far beyond what mortal man unaided could ever perform? Have you ever known what it is, through the power of Christ, to sit with Him in the heavenly places and from that altitude to look down on all the world and to utterly despise it as thing for babes to play with, or as a fools bauble, while you have reveled in the eternal glories and the infinite bliss that God has prepared for you? Read Rutherfords letters and if you have a spiritual understanding, you will say, This man had, indeed, learned Christ. He was like a harp, responsive to Christs lightest touch. His Master did but lay His hand upon the string, and the music came out at once! But you and I are often like an untuned harpeven our Lords hand brings no music out of us because we are not in a fit condition. Oh, that we might all truly know Christ and the power of His Resurrectionyes, and the power of His glorious Second Comingand the power of His spiritual Presence when He draws near to us in all His love and Grace!  
So, dear Brothers and Sisters, learning Christ really comes to this personal acquaintance with Christ, personal knowledge of His Nature and His offices, a personal experience of His power over the human heart, a personal knowledge of Him by the surrender of yourself to Him and, by His coming to incorporate you with Himself till, as it were, Christ shall live in you, and you shall live in Christ, and you two shall be one henceforth and evermore! There is a great deal more in this subject than I can bring out of it, but I must leave this part of it with you for your quiet meditations.   
II. Now, secondly, and very briefly, the Apostle says something about HOW WE HAVE NOT LEARNED OUR LESSON. You have not so learned Christ.   
There are some people who say that they have learned Christ, yet they remain just as they were before. They say that they are Christians, yet their lives give the lie to their language. They walk as other Gentiles walk, yet they go to godly assemblies and they sing pious hymns. But, Beloved, you have not so learned Christ   
Some even profess to have learned Christ so as to make an excuse for their sin out of the very fact that He is so ready to pardon. They think that sin is a small matter and that it will have no serious consequences but you have not so learned Christ. We never hated sin as much as we have since we learned what it cost our Lord to put it away. There are some who say that they have learned Christ, yet they never obey Him nor serve Him, nor try to imitate Him. You have not so learned Christ. God save us from a dry doctrinal knowledge of Christ! God save us from any kind of knowledge of Christ which is not in connection with true saving faith in Him and with a practical obedience to Him! There are some who talk much of what they know concerning Christ, who even commit sin in His name. We have nations marching to battle to kill and plunder and murder in the name of Christ! What did the Spaniards do, in years gone by, with the Indians, but plunder and slaughter them professedly in the name of Jesus Christ? And there are some, in nominally Christian countries today, who act in the same fashion! The Lord have mercy upon them! But you have not so learned Christ.   
We have met with some people who imagine that they cannot have their sin conquered. They think that they will be saved, but that sin is to have the mastery over thembut we have not so learned Christ. We have learned Him after this fashion, that we desire to be perfectly like He, and we believe that we shall be. We are aiming at this, and asking Him, by His Spirit, to change us into His own image from glory unto glory. And we are looking forward to the day when we shall see Him as He is, and shall be altogether like He. When a man enters a room where the walls are covered with mirrors, he sees his own likeness reproduced on all sideshere, and there, and there, and thereso is it with Christ in Heaven. All the saints reflect His image and He sees Himself in them all. This is their glory and it is also His Glory that He has given His image to them and it is that image which we desire to reproduce even now.   
Beware, dear Friends, of trying to learn Christ in any other way but this practical way of which I have been speaking. Never be satisfied with a theoretical knowledge of Christ, nor with mere head knowledge of Christ, nor with a hypocritical knowledge of Christ.   
III. Now, in the third place, we will notice HOW WE HAVE LEARNED CHRIST.  
I call your particular attention to the latter part of the text. If, indeed, you have heard Him. We must be taught by Christ and by the Holy Spirit. Dear Brothers and Sisters, do you say that you know Christ, that you have learned Christ? Tell me how you have learned Him. I heard our minister preach. Yes, yes, but did you hear Christ? The only way of learning Christ is thisIf, indeed, you have heard Him. You never know Christ by merely hearing men, you must hear Christ Himself! Do you not remember His own words, My sheep hear My voice? They not only hear the voice of the under-shepherd, but they hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, that Great Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep! And you never can know Christ unless you have thus heard Him speaking personally to you. You must regard the various sayings of Christ, recorded in this Book, not merely as things written in the Bible, but as the very words of the living Christ spoken afresh to you each time you read themjust as though they had never been uttered before.   
Perhaps you say, Well, Sir, all I know of Christ, I have learned from the Bible. It is quite right that it should be so, but how did you read the Bible? Did you merely become familiar with the letter of it and get what you could out of it by your own wit and wisdom? Then you have not yet learned Christ, for it is only as the Holy Spirit shall make the printed letter to be the very voice of Jesus Christ, Himself, to you that you will ever truly know Him. I do not see how I am to know a man to whom I have never spoken and who has never spoken to me. He may pass my house day by day yet if we never speak to one another, I cannot get to know him. A certain philosopher once said, Speak, and I shall see you. So we may say to the Lord Jesus Christ, Speak to me, Lord, and then I shall know You. None but Christ can manifest Christ. You cannot see the sun except by its own lightneither can you see Christ except by His own light, that is, by the Holy Spirit.

Now notice the next sentence. And have been taught by Him. The Greek is in Himand have been taught in Him. That is to say, the only way of learning more of Christ is by being in fellowship with Him. It very frequently happens to me that somebody calls to see me professing to have a message from God to deliver to me. It is usually some crack-pot individual or other who is not quite right in the upper story. But I will not receive messages that come in that fashionif the Lord wants to say anything to me, He knows where I live! I feel inclined to talk to these people as John Bunyan did to the Quaker who went to Bedford Jail and said to him, Friend Bunyan, the Lord has sent me with a message for you, and I have been over half of England trying to find you. No, said honest John, you are telling a lie, Friend, for if the Lord had sent you to me, He would have directed you straight here. I have been in this prison for the last 12 years and He has known all the time where I was.   
These roundabout, cross-country messages do not come from Christ at all. We learn Him by being with Him. Is it not said that if you want to know a man, you must live with him? Mr. Whitefield was once asked the character of a certain person, but he replied, I cannot tell you. Why not? the enquirer asked. Because I have never lived with him. After I have lived with him for a while, I shall be able to tell you what I think of him. So, if you want to know the Lord Jesus Christ, you must live with Him! First He must Himself speak to you and, afterwards, you must abide in Him. He must be the choice Companion of your morning hours. He must be with you throughout the day and with Him you must also close the night. And as often as you may wake during the night, you must say, When I awake, I am still with You. There is no way of fully learning Christ except by being perpetually with Him.   
I should suppose that a man who has been in Heaven five minutes, actually beholding Christ, knows more of Him than the most instructed member of the assembly of divines ever learns here below! Oh, how much we shall learn of Christ in our first glimpse of Him! Oh, that these eyes could behold Him even now! Some people talk and write a great deal about what we shall see in Heaven, but I do not pay much heed to what they say. It will be a long while before I shall want to take my eyes off my Savior. I agree with Dr. Watts in that verse which we have often sung *Millions of years my wondering eyes   
Shall oer Your beauties rove   
And endless ages Ill adore   
The glories of Your love.*

We shall learn Christ faster there than we can here because we shall always be with Him and we shall see Him as He is.

The last part of the text says, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus. There is no word, the, in the original, it is as truth is in Jesus. That is to say, we must truly know Christ as Truth, and it should be our desire to know truth even as it is in Him. Truth is fully in Christ, so we must seek to know it fully. Truth is also in Christ, practicallyit is embodied in Him. Truth in Christ was not a mere philosophy, not simply dry doctrineHe lived the truth, yes, He was the Truth. This is how we need to know Christtill truth in Christ shall be truth revealed to us, truth embodied in us, truth lived out again by us as truth is in Jesusevery lie put far away from us, all guile and deceit forever banished. As truth was in Jesus, with no fiction and no guileas He was pure, simple-minded, childlikeso shall we become through learning Him and being made like He! We, too, shall become true, transparent, candid, honest, upright, Christ-like men and women.

I wish we were all like that, dear Friends, but we know too much, or think we do. We are too cunning and look too much round about us to be as Christ was. People laugh at us if we wear our hearts upon our sleeve for birds to peck at. And we think that we should keep ourselves to ourselves, and be careful, and cautious, and even suspicious of all we meet. Oh, but I would rather be taken in a thousand times than suspect other people! It is better to wear your heart wide open, though men laugh at its every movement, than it is to cover it up and try to conceal what we really are. God make us like the holy Child Jesuschildren of God, with Christ Jesus for our elder Brother! That is what we shall be when we have learned Christ, have heard Him and have been taught by Him as truth is in Him! May it be so with all of us! God bless you and help you to cherish and to realize this desire, for Christs own names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H, SPURGEON: **ZECHARIAH 13.**

Verse 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. They shall see their pardon when they have truly seen their sin. When once the foulness of their transgression is perceived, then the fountain of cleansing shall be perceived, too. No man ever knows the preciousness of the God-given remedy till he has felt the force of the terrible disease. No one by faith plunges into the crystal fount of perfect cleansing without first lamenting the filthiness which needs to be removed!

2. And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the false prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. Where there is pardon, there is sure to be sanctification. The idols must fall and the false prophets must go. We cannot have our sins and have a Savior, too. If we have Christ to blot out our sin, we must have the same Christ to remove sin as to its authority, power and dominion over us.

3. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy. When any false prophet shall still pretend to prophesy   
3. Then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesies. So intense shall be the hatred of false prophets, that men shall not spare even their own children! They shall abhor them when they stand up against the Lord of Hosts and against His truth.   
4. And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed, every one, of his vision, when he has prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive. They shall give up this wicked employment at once and forever. Just as when one who has pretended to tell fortunes, is converted, and he forsakes that evil occupation, so converted men must never be in association with those who are familiar with the spirits of the dead and who practice sorcery and the like abominations! Everything of the kind is to be abhorred by godly men and they must turn away from it with holy horror and disgust.   
5, 6. But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in your hands? What are these marks of the idol gods and goddesses? Have you not been branded with them? Did you not belong to the accursed fraternity that worship idols and receive the stigmata in their hands?   
6. Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Idolatry shall become so detestable a thing that he will say anything rather than acknowledge that he has had anything to do with idols. Those very marks in which the false prophets once gloried, they shall loathe. The Brahmin shall throw away his sacred thread and those who have been tattooed in honor of other false gods shall hate the marks of shame that are upon their persons. Now, Brothers and Sisters, inasmuch as the heathen prophets received in their bodies the marks of their gods, we understand something of what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians, From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He regarded his Baptism as a kind of watermark that could not be removed. He looked upon the marks of the scourge, with which he had been beaten again and again for Christs sake, as being proofs that he belonged to Jesus. They stamped him with the broad arrow of the great King, so that all men might know that he was dedicated to Him and to His service, tattooed with marks in his flesh that were indelible and never to be re moved!   
7, 8. Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the LORD of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, says the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. So, in the times of Gods fiercest judgments, He has a remnant according to the election of Grace who shall escape the sword because that sword has been awakened against Him who was their Representative, their Suretyand who stood as Substitute in their place.   
9. And I will bring the third part through the fire. Saved, yet so as by fire. This is true in a certain sense of all the righteous. They shall certainly be saved and though the fires of persecution should rage around, the Lord will bring them through the fire. They shall not perish in it, but they shall even derive good from itI will bring the third part through the fire.  
9. And will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. If you are Gods people, you will certainly be tried and tested. As surely as ever God has put you in the third part that He will save, He has also ordained that you should pass through the fire. You shall have both within and without, that which shall test your sincerity, and prove whether your faith is of Divine origin or not. There is no easy road to Heaven   
*The path of sorrow, and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.* Yet we who believe in Jesus are not an unhappy peoplethe character of Gods saints is still according to Pauls paradoxes, As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

9. They shall call on My name, and I will hear them. What a precious little sentencethey shall call on My name! And God will give ear to their prayerand I will hear them. The shall and the will are put close together, and the one is as much the work of Gods Grace as the other is! They shall call on my name, and I will hear them.   
9. I will say: This is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God. Note these quick responsesechoes, as it were. They call and God hears! God speaks and they reply. God says, This is My people. They answer, The Lord is my God. Blessed are you if you can join in these heart echoes, or can say, with the spouse, My Beloved is mine, and I am His. Is there this mutual interchange of love between you and the allglorious Lord? If so, thrice happy are you! But if not, God grant that you may speedily enter into this secret of the Lord! May He bless to every one of us the reading of His Word, for His dear Sons sake! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #278 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT   
NO. 278

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 9, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.   
Ephesians 4:30.

THERE is something very touching in this admonition, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. It does not say, Do not make Him angry. A more delicate and tender term is usedGrieve Him not. There are some men of so hard a character that to make another angry does not give them much pain. And indeed, there are many of us who are scarcely to be moved by the information that another is angry with us. But where is the heart so hard that it is not moved when we know that we have caused others grief?for grief is a sweet combination of anger and of love. It is anger, but all the gall is taken from it. Love sweetens the anger and turns the edge of it, not against the person, but against the offense. We all know how we use the two terms in contra-distinction, the one to the other.

When I commit any offense, some friend who has but little patience suddenly snaps asunder his forbearance and is angry with me. The same offense is observed by a loving father and he is grieved. There is anger in his bosom, but he is angry and sins not, for he is angry against my sin. And yet there is love to neutralize and modify the anger towards me. Instead of wishing me ill as the punishment of my sin, he looks upon my sin itself as being the ill. He grieves to think that I am already injured, from the fact that I have sinned. I say this is a heavenly compound, more precious than all the ointment of the merchants. There may be the bitterness of myrrh, but there is all the sweetness of frankincense in this sweet term to grieve.

I am certain, my Hearers, I do not flatter you when I declare that I am sure that the most of you would grieve if you thought you were grieving anyone else. You, perhaps, would not care much if you had made anyone angry without a cause. But to grieve him, even though it were without a cause and without intention, would nevertheless cause you distress of heart and you would not rest until this grief had subsidedtill you had made some explanation or apology and had done your best to allay the smart and take away the grief. When we see anger in another, we at once begin to feel hostility. Anger begets anger. But grief begets pity and pity is next akin to love. Now, is not this a very sweet expressionGrieve not the Holy Spirit:? Of course the language is be to understood as speaking after the manner of men. The Holy Spirit of God knows no passion or suffering, but nevertheless His emotion is here described in human language as being that of grief. And is it not, I say, a tender and touching thing, that the

Holy Spirit should direct His servant Paul to say to us, Grieve not the Holy Spirit. Do not excite His loving anger, do not vex Him, do not cause Him to mourn. He is a dovedo not cause Him to mourn, because you have treated Him harshly and ungratefully.

Now, the purport of my sermon this morning will be to exhort you not to grieve the Spirit. But I shall divide it thusfirst I shall discourse upon the love of the Spirit. Secondly, upon the seal of the Spirit. Then, thirdly, upon the grieving of the Spirit.

I. The few words I have to say UPON THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT will all be pressing forward to my great markstirring you up not to grieve the Spirit. When we are persuaded that another loves us, we find at once a very potent reason why we should not grieve him. The love of the Spirit! How shall I explain it? Surely it needs a songster to sing it, for love is only to be spoken of in words of song. The love of the Spirit! Let me tell you of His early love to us. He loved us without beginning. In the Everlasting Covenant of Grace, as I told you last Sabbath, He was one of the high contracting parties in the Divine contract, whereby we are saved.

All that can be said of the love of the Father and of the love of the Son, may be said of the love of the Spiritit is eternal, it is infinite, it is sovereign, it is everlastingit is a love which cannot be dissolved, which cannot be decreased, a love which cannot be removed from those who are the objects of it. Permit me, however, to refer you to His acts, rather than His attributes. Let me tell you of the love of the Spirit to you and to me. Oh how early was that love which He manifested towards us, even in our childhood!

My Brethren, we can well remember how the Spirit was desirous to strive with us. We went astray from the womb speaking lies, but how early did the Spirit of God stir up our conscience and solemnly correct us on account of our youthful sins? How frequently since then has the Spirit wooed us! How often under the ministry has He compelled our hearts to melt and the tear has run down our cheeks and He has sweetly whispered in our ear, My son, give Me your heart. Go to your chamber, shut your door about you, confess your sins and seek a Saviors love and blood. Ohbut let us blush to tell ithow often have we done despite to Him! When we were in a state of unregeneracy, how we were desirous to resist Him!

We quenched the Spirit. He strove with us but we strove against Him. But blessed be His dear name and let Him have everlasting songs for it, He would not let us go! We would not be saved, but He would save us. We sought to thrust ourselves into the fire, but He sought to pluck us from the burning. We would dash ourselves from the precipice, but He wrestled with us and held us fast. He would not let us destroy our souls. Oh, how we ill-treated Him, how we did set at nothing His counsel! How did we scorn and scoff Him. How did we despise the ordinance which would lead us to Christ! How did we violate that holy cord which was gently drawing us to Jesus and His Cross! I am sure, my Brothers and Sisters, at the recollections of the persevering struggles of the Spirit with you, you must be stirred up to love Him.

How often did He restrain you from sin when you were about to plunge headlong into a course of vice! How often did He constrain you to good, when you would have neglected it! You, perhaps, would not have been in the way at alland the Lord would not have met youif it had not been for that sweet Spirit, who would not let you become a blasphemer, who would not suffer you to forsake the House of God and would not permit you to become a regular attendant at the haunts of vice, but checked you and held you in, as it were, with bit and bridle. Though you were like a bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke, yet He would not let you have your way. Though you struggled against Him, yet He would not throw the reins upon your necks, but He said, I will have him, I will have him against his will. I will change his heart, I will not let him go till I have made him a trophy of My mighty power to save. And then think, my Brethren, of the love of the Spirit after that

*Do mind the time, the spot of land,   
Where Jesus did you meet?   
Where He first took you by the hand,   
Your bridegrooms lovehow sweet!*

Ah, then, in that blest hour, to memory dear, was it not the Holy Spirit who guided you to Jesus? Do you remember the love of the Spirit, when, after having quickened you, He took you aside and showed you Jesus on the tree? Who was it that opened our blind eyes to see a dying Savior? Who was it that opened our deaf ears to hear the voice of pardoning love? Who opened our clasped and palsied hands to receive the tokens of a Saviors grace? Who was it that broke our hard hearts and made a way for the Savior to enter and dwell therein? Oh, it was that precious Spiritthat same Spiritto whom you have done so much despite, whom in the days of your flesh you have resisted! What a mercy it was that He did not say, I will swear in My wrath that they shall not enter into My rest, for they have vexed Me and I will take My everlasting flight from them. Or thus, Ephraim is joined unto idols, I will let him alone!

And since that time, my Brethren, how sweetly has the Spirit proved His love to you and to me. It is not only in His first striving and then His Divine quickening, but in all the sequel, how much have we owed to His instruction. We have been dull scholars with the Word before us, plain and simple, so that he that runs may read and he that reads may understandyet how small a portion of His Word has our memory retained how little progress have we made in the school of Gods grace! We are but learners yetunstable, weak and apt to slidebut what a blessed Instructor we have had! Has He not led us into many a Truth of God and taken of the things of Christ and applied them unto us?

Oh, when I think how stupid I have been, I wonder that He has not given me up. When I think what a dolt I have been, when He would have taught me the things of the kingdom of God, I marvel that He should have had such patience with me. Is it a wonder that Jesus should become a babe? Is it not an equal wonder that the Spirit of the living God should

become a teacher of babes? It is a marvel that Jesus should lie in a mangeris it not an equal marvel that the Holy Spirit should become an Usher in the sacred school, to teach fools and make them wise? It was condescension that brought the Savior to the Cross, but is it not equal condescension that brings the mighty Spirit of Grace down to dwell with stubborn unruly, wild asses colts, to teach them the mystery of the kingdom and make them know the wonders of a Saviors love?

Furthermore, my Brethren, forget not how much we owe to the Spirits consolation, how much has He manifested His love to you in cherishing you in all your sicknesses, assisting you in all your labors and comforting you in all your distresses. I can testify He has been a blessed Comforter to me. When every other comfort failed, when the promise itself seemed empty, when the ministry was void of power, it is then the Holy Spirit has proved a rich comfort unto my soul and filled my poor heart with peace and joy in believing. How many times would your heart have broken if the Spirit had not bound it up! How often has He who is your teacher become also your physician, closed the wounds of your poor bleeding spirit and has bound up those wounds with the plaster of the promise? And thus He has stanched the bleeding and has given you back your spiritual health once more.

It does seem to rise a marvel that the Holy Spirit should become a Comforter, for comforting is, to many minds, but an inferior work in the Church, though really it is not so. To teach, to preach, to command with authorityhow many are willing to do this because this is honorable work. But to sit down and bear with the infirmities of the creature, to enter into all the stratagems of unbelief, to find the soul a way of peace in the midst of seas of troublethis is compassion like a God, that the Holy Spirit should stoop from Heaven to become a Comforter of disconsolate spirits. What? Must He Himself bring the cordial? Must He wait upon His sick child and stand by his bed? Must He make his bed for him in his afflictions, must He carry him in his infirmity? Must He breathe continually into him his very breath? Does the Holy Spirit become a waiting servant of the Church? Does He become a lamp to enlighten? Does He become a staff on which we may lean? This, I say, should move us to love the Holy Spirit, for we have in all this, abundant proofs of His love to us.

Stop not here, Belovedthere are larger fields yet beyondnow that we are speaking of the love of the Spirit. Remember how much He loves us when He helps our infirmities. No, not only does He help our infirmities, but when we know not what to pray for as we ought He teaches us how to pray and when we ourselves groan within ourselves, then the Spirit Himself makes intersession for us with groans which cannot be uttered groans as we should groan, but more audiblyso that our prayers, which otherwise would have been silent, reach the ears of Christ and is then presented before His Fathers face. To help our infirmities is a mighty instance of love. When God overcomes infirmity altogether, or removes it, there is something very noble and grand and sublime in the deed. When He permits the infirmity to remain and yet works with the infirmity, this is tender compassion indeed.

When the Savior heals the lame man you see His Godhead, but when He walks with the lame man, limping though his gait may bewhen He sits with the beggar, when He talks with the publican, when He carries the babe in His bosomthen this helping of infirmities is a manifestation of love almost unequalled. Except for Christs bearing our infirmities upon the tree and our sins in His own body, I know of no greater or more tender instance of Divine love than when it is written, Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. Oh how much you owe to the Spirit when you have been on your knees in prayer! You know, my Brethren, what it is to be dull and lifeless there. To groan for a word and yet you cannot find it. To wish for a word and yet the very wish is languid. To long to have desires and yet all the desire you have is a desire that you may be able to desire.

Oh, have you not sometimes, when your desires have been kindled, longed to get a grip at the promise by the hand of faith? Oh, you have said, if I could but plead the promise, all my necessities would be removed and all my sorrows would be allayed. But, alas, the promise was beyond your reach. If you touched it with the tip of your finger you could not grasp it as you desired, you could not plead it and therefore you came away without the blessing. But when the Spirit has helped our infirmities how have we prayed! Why, there have been times when you and I have so grasped the knocker at the Gate of Mercy and have let it fall with such tremendous force, that it seemed as if the very gate itself did shake and totter.

There have been seasons when we have laid hold upon the angel, have overcome Heaven by prayer, have declared we would not let Jehovah Himself go except He should bless us. We have and we say it without blasphemy, moved the arm that moves the world. We have brought down upon us the eyes that look upon the universe. All this we have done, not by our own strength, but by the might and by the power of the Spirit. He has so sweetly enabled us, though we have so often forgotten to thank Him. He has so graciously assisted us though we have often taken all the glory to ourselves instead of airing it to Himmust we not admire His love and must it not be a fearful sin, indeed, to grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we are sealed?

Another token of the Spirits love remains, namely, His indwelling in the saints. We sing in one of our hymns

*Do You not dwell in all the saints?*   
We ask a question which can have but one answer. He does dwell in the heart of all Gods redeemed and blood-washed people. And what a condescension is this, that He whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, dwells in your breast, my Brothers and Sisters! That breast often covered with rags, may be a breast often agitated with anxious care and thought, a breast too often defiled with sin and yet He dwells there. The little narrow heart of manthe Holy Spirit has made His palace. Though it is but a cottage, a very hovel and all unholy and uncleanyet does the Holy Spirit

condescend to make the heart of His people His continual abode.

Oh my Friends, when I think how often you and I have let the devil in, I wonder the Spirit has not withdrawn from us! The final perseverance of the saints is one of the greatest miracles on record. In fact, it is the sum total of miracles. The perseverance of a saint for a single day is a multitude of miracles of mercy. When you consider that the Spirit is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and yet He dwells in the heart where sin often intrudesa heart out of which comes blasphemies and murders and all manner of evil thoughts and concupiscencewhat if sometimes He is grieved and retires and leaves us to ourselves for a season? It is a marvel that He is there at all, for He must be daily grieved with these evil guests, these false traitors, these base intruders who thrust themselves into that little temple which He has honored with His presencethe temple of the heart of man.

I am afraid, dear Friends, we are too much in the habit of talking of the love of Jesus, without thinking of the love of the Holy Spirit. Now I would not wish to exalt one Person of the Trinity above another, but I do feel thisthat because Jesus Christ was a Man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and therefore there was something tangible in Him that can be seen with the eyes and handled with the hands, therefore we more readily think of Him and fix our love on Him, than we do upon the Spirit. But why should it be? Let us love Jesus with all our hearts and let us love the Holy Spirit, too. Let us have songs for Him, gratitude for Him. We do not forget Christs Cross, let us not forget the Spirits operations. We do not forget what Jesus has done for us, let us always remember what the Spirit does in us.

Why do you talk of the love and grace and tenderness and faithfulness of Christ? Why do you not say the same of the Spirit? Was ever love like His, that He should visit us? Was ever mercy like His, that He should bear with our ill manners, though constantly repeated by us? Was ever faithfulness like His, that multitudes of sins cannot drive Him away? Was ever power like His, that overcomes all our iniquities and yet leads us safely on, though hosts of foes within and without would rob us of our Christian life?

*Oh, the love of the Spirit I sing*

*By whom is redemption applied.*   
And unto His name be glory forever and ever.   
II. This brings me to the second point. Here we have another reason

why we should not grieve the Spirit. IT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WE ARE SEALED. BY whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption. I shall be very brief here. The Spirit Himself is expressed as the Seal, even as He Himself is directly said to be the Pledge of our inheritance. The sealing, I think, has a three-fold meaning. It is a sealing of attestation or confirmation. I want to know whether I am truly a child of God. The Spirit itself also bears witness with my spirit that I am born of God. I have the writings, the title-deeds of the inheritance that is to comeI want to know whether those are valid, whether they are true, or whether they are mere counterfeits written out by those old scribes of Hell, Master Presumption and Carnal Security.

How am I to know? I look for the Seal. After we have believed on the Son of God, the Father seals us as His children, by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now He which has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. No faith is genuine which does not bear the seal of the Spirit. No love, no hope can ever save us, except it is sealed with the Spirit of God, for whatever has not His seal upon it is spurious. Faith that is unsealed may be poison, it may be presumption. But faith that is sealed by the Spirit is true, real, genuine faith. Never be content, my dear Hearers, unless you are sealed, unless you are sure, by the inward witness and testimony of the Holy Spirit, that you have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is possible for a man to know infallibly that he is secure of Heaven. He may not only hope so, but he may know it beyond a doubt and he may know it thusby being able with the eye of faith to see the seal, the broad stamp of the Holy Spirit set upon his own character and experience. It is a seal of attestation.

In the next place, it is a sealing of appropriation. When men put their mark upon an article, it is to show that it is their own. The farmer brands his tools that they may not be stolen. They are his. The shepherd marks his sheep that they may be recognized as belonging to his flock. The king himself puts his broad arrow upon everything that is his property. So the Holy Spirit puts the broad arm of God upon the hearts of all His people. He seals us. You shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels. And then the Spirit puts Gods seal upon us to signify that we are Gods reserved inheritanceHis peculiar people, the portion in which His soul delights.

But, again, by sealing is meant preservation. Men seal up that which they wish to have preserved and when a document is sealed it becomes valid. Now, it is by the Spirit of God that the Christian is sealed, that he is kept, he is preserved, sealed unto the day of redemptionsealed until Christ comes fully to redeem the bodies of His saints by raising them from the death and fully to redeem the world by purging it from sin and making it a kingdom unto Himself in righteousness. We shall hold on our way, we shall be saved. The chosen seed cannot be lostthey must be brought home at lastbut how? By the sealing of the Spirit. Apart from that, they perish, they are undone. When the last general fire shall blaze out, everything that has not the seal of the Spirit on it shall be burned up. But the men upon whose forehead is the seal shall be preserved. They shall be safe amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds. Their spirits, mounting above the flames, shall dwell with Christ eternally. And with that same seal on their forehead upon Mount Zion, they shall sing the everlasting song of gratitude and praise. I say this is the second reason why we should love the Spirit and why we should not grieve Him. III. I come now to the third part of my discourse, namely, THE GRIEVING OF THE SPIRIT. How may we grieve Himwhat will be the sad result of grieving Himif we have grieved Him, how may we bring Him back again? How may we grieve the SpiritI am now, mark you, speaking of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is in your hearts and it is very, very easy, indeed, to grieve Him. Sin is as easy as it is wicked. You may grieve Him by impure thoughts. He cannot bear sin. If you indulge in lascivious expressions, or if even you allow imagination to coat upon any lascivious act, or if your heart goes after covetousnessif you set your heart upon anything that is evilthe Spirit of God will be grieved, for thus I hear Him speaking of Himself, I love this man, I want to have his heart and yet he is entertaining these filthy lusts. His thoughts, instead of running after Me and after Christ and after the Father, are running after the temptations that are in the world through lust.

And then His Spirit is grieved. He sorrows in His soul because He knows what sorrow these things must bring to our souls. We grieve Him yet more if we indulge in outward acts of sin. Then is He sometimes so grieved that He takes His flight for a season, for the Dove will not dwell in our hearts if we take loathsome carrion in there. A clean being is the Dove and we must not strew the place which the Dove frequents with filth and mireif we do, He will fly elsewhere. If we commit, sin if we openly bring disgrace upon our religion, if we tempt others to go into iniquity by our evil example, it is not long before the Holy Spirit will begin to grieve. Again, if we neglect prayer, if our closet door is cob-webbed, if we forget to read the Scriptures, if the leaves of our Bible are almost stuck together by neglect, if we never seek to do any good in the world, if we live merely for ourselves and not for Christ, then the Holy Spirit will be grieved, for thus He says, They have forsaken Me, they have left the fountain of waters, they have hewn unto themselves broken cisterns.

I think I now see the Spirit of God grieving, when you are sitting down to read a novel and there is your Bible unread. Perhaps you take down some book of travels and you forget that you have got a more precious book of travels in the Acts of the Apostles and in the story of your blessed Lord and Master. You have no time for prayer, but the Spirit sees you very active about worldly things and having many hours to spare for relaxation and amusement. And then He is grieved because He sees that you love worldly things better than you love Him. His spirit is grieved within Him take care that He does not go away from youfor it will be a pitiful thing for you if He leaves you to yourself.

Againingratitude tends to grieve Him. Nothing cuts a man to the heart more than after having done his utmost for another, he turns round and repays him with ingratitude or insult. If we do not want to be thanked, at least we do love to know that there is thankfulness in the heart upon which we have conferred a blessing. When the Holy Spirit looks into our soul and sees little love to Christ, no gratitude to Him for all He has done for us, then is He grieved.

Againthe Holy Spirit is exceedingly grieved by our unbelief. When we distrust the promise He has given and applied, when we doubt the power or the affection of our blessed Lordthen the Spirit says within Himself They doubt My fidelity, they distrust My power, they say Jesus is not able to save unto the uttermostthus again is the Spirit grieved. Oh, I wish the Spirit had an advocate here this morning that could speak in better terms than I can. I have a theme that overmasters me, I seem to grieve for Him. But I cannot make you grieve, nor explain the grief I feel. In my own soul I keep saying, Oh, this is just what you have doneyou have grieved Him. Let me make a full and frank confession even before you all. I know that too often, I, as well as you, have grieved the Holy Spirit. Much within us has made that sacred Dove to mourn and my marvel is that He has not taken His flight from us and left us utterly to ourselves.

Now suppose the Holy Spirit is grievedwhat is the effect produced upon us? When the Spirit is grieved, He first bears with us. He is grieved again and again and again and again and still He bears with it all. But at last His grief becomes so excessive, that He says, I will suspend My operations. I will leave life behind Me, but My own actual Presence I will take away. And when the Spirit of God goes away from the soul and suspends all His operations, what a miserable state we are in. He suspends His instructions. We read the Word, we cannot understand it. We go to our commentaries, they cannot tell us the meaning. We fall on our knees and ask to be taught, but we get no answer, we learn nothing. He suspends His comfort. We used to dance, like David before the ark and now we sit like Job in the ash pit and scrape our ulcers with a potsherd.

There was a time when His candle shone round about us, but now He is gone. He has left us in the black of darkness. Now He takes from us all spiritual power. Once we could do all things. Now we can do nothing. We could slay the Philistines and lay them heaps upon heaps, but now Delilah can deceive us and our eyes are put out and we are made to grind in the mill. We go preaching and there is no pleasure in preaching and no good follows it. We go to our tract distributing and our Sunday-School we might almost as well be at home. There is the machinery there, but there is no love. There is the intention to do good, or perhaps not even that, but alas, there is no power to accomplish the intention. The Lord has withdrawn Himself, His light, His joy, His comfort, His spiritual power, all are gone.

And then all our graces flag. Our graces are much like the flower called the Hydrangea, when it has plenty of water it blooms, but as soon as moisture fails, the leaves drop down at once. And so when the Spirit goes away, faith shuts up its flowersno perfume is exhaled. Then the fruit of our love begins to rot and drops from the tree. Then the sweet buds of our hope become frostbitten and they die. Oh, what a sad thing it is to lose the Spirit. Have you ever, my Brethren, been on your knees and have been conscious that the Spirit of God was not with you and what awful work it has been to groan and cry and sigh and yet go away again and no light to shine upon the promises, not so much as a ray of light through the chink of the dungeon? All forsaken, forgotten and forlorn, you are almost

driven to despair. You sing with Cowper   
*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,   
How sweet their memory still!   
But they have left an aching void,   
The world can never fill.   
Return, you sacred Dove, return,   
Sweet messenger of rest,   
I hate the sins that made You mourn,   
And drove You from my breast.   
The dearest idol I have known,   
Whatever that idol be,   
Help me to tear it from its throne,   
And worship only You.*

Ah, sad enough it is to have the Spirit drawn from us! But, my Brethren, I am about to say something with the utmost charity, which, perhaps, may look severe, but, nevertheless, I must say it. The Churches of the present day are very much in the position of those who have grieved the Spirit of God. For the Spirit deals with Churches just as it does with individuals. Of these late years how little has God worked in the midst of His Churches. Throughout England, at least some four or five years ago, an almost universal torpor had fallen upon the visible body of Christ. There was a little action, but it was spasmodic. There was no real vitality. Oh, how few sinners were brought to Christ, how empty had our places of worship become. Our Prayer Meetings were dwindling away to nothing and our Church meetings were mere matters of farce.

You know right well that this is the case with many London Churches to this day. And there are some that do not mourn about it. They go up to their accustomed places and the minister prays and the people either sleep with their eyes or else with their hearts and they go out and there is never a soul saved. The pool of Baptism is seldom stirred. But the saddest part of all is thisthe Churches are willing to have it so. They are not earnest to get a revival of religion. We have been doing something, the Church at large has been doing something. I will not just now put my finger upon what the sin is, but there has been something done which has driven the Spirit of God from us. He is grieved and He is gone.

He is present with us here, I thank His nameHe is still visible in our midst. He has not left us. Though we have been as unworthy as others, yet has He given us a long outpouring of His presence. These five years or more we have had a revival which is not to be exceeded by any revival upon the face of the earth. Without cries or shouts, without fallings down or swooning, steadily God adds to this Church numbers upon numbers, so that your ministers heart is ready to break with very joy when he thinks how manifestly the Spirit of God is with us.

But Brethren, we must not be content with this, we want to see the Spirit poured out on all Churches. Look at the great gatherings that there were in St. Pauls and Westminster Abbey and Exeter Hall and other placeshow was it that no good was doneor so very little? I have watched with anxious eyes and I have never from that day forth heard but of one conversion and that in St. James Hall, from all these services. Strange it seems. The blessing may have come in larger measure than we know, but not in so large a measure as we might have expected, if the Spirit of God had been present with all the ministers.

Oh would that we may live to see greater things than we have ever seen yet. Go home to your houses, humble yourselves before God, you members of Christs Church and cry aloud that He will visit His Church and that He would open the windows of Heaven and pour out His Grace upon His thirsty hill of Zion, that nations may be born in a day, that sinners may be saved by thousandsthat Zion may travail and may bring forth children. Oh, there are signs and tokens of a coming revival. We have heard but lately of a good work among the Ragged School boys of St. Giless and our soul has been glad on account of that. And the news from Ireland comes to us like good tidings, not from a far country, but from a sister province of the kingdom. Let us cry aloud to the Holy Spirit, who is certainly grieved with His Church, and let us purge our Churches of everything that is contrary to His Word and to sound doctrine and then the Spirit will return and His power shall be manifest.

And now, in conclusion, there may be some of you here who have lost the visible presence of Christ with youwho have in fact so grieved the Spirit that He has gone. It is a mercy for you to know that the Spirit of God never leaves His people finally. He leaves them for chastisement, but not for damnation. He sometimes leaves them that they may get good by knowing their own weakness, but He will not leave them finally to perish. Are you in a state of backsliding, declension and coldness? Hearken to me for a moment and God bless the words. Brothers and Sisters, stay not a moment in a condition so perilous. Be not easy for a single second in the absence of the Holy Spirit. I beseech you use every means by which that Spirit may be brought back to you. Once more, let me tell you distinctly what the means are.

Search out for the sin that has grieved the Spirit. Give it up, slay that sin upon the spot. Repent with tears and sighs. Continue in prayer and never rest satisfied until the Holy Spirit comes back to you. Frequent an earnest ministry, get much with earnest saintsbut above all, be much in prayer to God and let your daily cry be, Return, return, O Holy Spirit return and dwell in my soul. Oh, I beseech you be not content till that prayer is heard, for you have become weak as water and faint and empty while the Spirit has been away from you.

Oh, it may be there are some here this morning with whom the Spirit has been striving during the past week. Oh yield to Him, resist Him not. Grieve Him not, but yield to Him. Is He saying to you now, Turn to Christ? Listen to Him, obey Him, He moves you. Oh I beseech you do not despise Him. Have you resisted Him many times? Then take care you do not again, for there may come a last time when the Spirit may say, I will go unto My rest, I will not return unto him, the ground is accursed, it

shall be given up to barrenness.

Oh, hear the word of the Gospel, before you separate, for the Spirit speaks effectually to you now in this short sentenceRepent and be converted, every one of you, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And hear this solemn sentence, He that believes in the Lord Jesus and is baptized, shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned. May the Lord grant that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 738

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 3, 1867,   
BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30.

IT is a very clear proof of the Personality of the Holy Spirit that He can be grieved. Now, it would be very difficult to imagine an influence, or a mere spiritual emanation being grieved. We can only grieve a person, and, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit may be grieved, we see that He is a distinct subsistence in the sacred Trinity. Rob Him not of the glory which is due to Him but be ever mindful to do Him homage. Our text, moreover, reveals to us the close connection between the Holy Spirit and the Believer. He must take a very tender and affectionate interest in us since He is grieved by our shortcomings and our sins. He is not a God who reigns in solitary isolation, divided by a great gulf, but He, the blessed Spirit, comes into such near contact with us, takes such minute observations, feels such tender regards that He can be grieved by our faults and follies.

Although the word, grieve, is a painful one, yet there is honey in the rock! For it is an inexpressibly delightful thought that He who rules Heaven and earth, and is the creator of all things, and the infinite and ever blessed God, condescends to enter into such infinite relationships with His people that His Divine mind may be affected by their actions! What a marvel that Deity should be said to grieve over the faults of beings so utterly insignificant as we are! We may not understand the expression literally, as though the sacred Spirit could be affected with sorrow like to human sorrow, but we must not forego the consolatory assurance that He takes the same deep interest in us as a fond parent takes in a beloved but wayward child! Is not this a marvel? Let those who cannot feel, be unmoved. As for me, I shall not cease to wonder and adore!

I. The first point which we will consider this morning, is THE ASTOUNDING FACT that the Holy Spirit may be grieved. That loving, tender Spirit who, of His own accord, has taken upon Himself to quicken us from our death in sin and to be the Educator of the new life which He has implanted within usthat Divine Instructor, Illuminator, Comforter, Remembrancer whom Jesus has sent forth to be our abiding Guide and Teachermay be grieved! He whose Divine energy is life to our souls, dew to our graces, light to our understandings and comfort to our hearts may be vexed by us! The heavenly Dove may be disturbed! The celestial Fire may be dampened! The Divine Wind may be resisted! The blessed Paraclete may be treated with despite!

The loving grief of the Holy Spirit may be traced to His holy Character and perfect attributes. It is the nature of a holy being to be vexed with unholiness. There can be no concord between God and Belial. A Spirit immaculately pure cannot but take umbrage at uncleanness, and especially must He be grieved by the presence of evil in the objects of His affections. Sin everywhere must be displeasing to the Spirit of holiness, but sin in His own people is grievous to Him in the highest degree. He will not hate His people, but He does hate their sinsand hates them all the more because they nestle in His childrens bosoms.

The Spirit would not be the Spirit of Truth if He could approve of that which is false in us. He would not be pure if that which is impure in us did not grieve Him. We could not believe Him to be holy if He could look with complacency upon our unholiness. Nor should we think of Him as being perfect if our imperfection could be regarded by Him without displeasure. No, because He is what He isthe Holy Spirit and the Spirit of holinesstherefore everything in us which falls short of His own Nature must be grievous to Him. He helps our infirmities, but He grieves over our sins. He is grieved with us mainly for our own sakes, for He knows what misery sin will cost us. He reads our sorrows in our sins.

Ah, silly sheep, He seems to say, I know the dark mountain upon which you will stumble. I see the thorns which will cut you, and the wounds which will pierce you! I know, O wayward child, the rod which you are making for your own back by your follies! I know, poor erring one, into what a sea of trouble you will plunge yourself by that headstrong will, that quick temper, that love of self, that ardent pursuit of gain. He grieves over us because He sees how much chastisement we incur, and how much communion we lose.

When we might have been upon the mountain of fellowship, we are sighing in the dungeon of despondency, and all because, from motives of fleshy ease, we preferred to go down By-Path Meadow, and forsake the right way because it was rough. The Spirit is grieved that we should thus bring ourselves into the darkness of a loathsome dungeon, and subject ourselves to the blows of the crab tree club of giant Despair. He foresees how bitterly we shall rue the day in which we parted company with Jesus and so pierced ourselves through with many sorrows. He foresees that the backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, and grieves because He foresees the backsliders grief. A mothers grief for the wrong-doing of her prodigal son is not so much the pain which he has directly occasioned her, as the sorrow which she knows that he will bring upon himself.

David did not so much lament his own loss of his child, as Absaloms death, with all its dread results, to Absalom himself. O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Here is deep sorrow. But the next sentence shows that it was by no means selfish, for he is willing to take a greater grief upon himself Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son! Such is the holy grief of the Spirit of God for those in whom He dwells. It is for their sakes that He is troubled.

Moreover, it is doubtless for Jesus Christs sake that the Spirit is grieved. We are the purchase of Jesus death upon the treeHe has bought us dearly and He should have us altogether for Himselfand when He does not have us completely as His own, you can well conceive that the Spirit of God is grieved. We ought to glorify Christ in these mortal bodies! It should be the one end and object of our desire to crown that head with gems which once was crowned with thorns. It is lamentable that we should so frequently fail in this reasonable service. Jesus deserves our bestevery wound of His claims us, and every pang He bore, and every groan that escaped His lips is a fresh reason for perfect holiness and complete devotion to His cause! And, because the Holy Spirit sees us so traitorous to the love of Christ, so false to that redeeming blood, so forgetful of our solemn obligations, He grieves over us because we dishonor our Lord.

Shall I be wrong if I say that He grieves over us for the Churchs sake? How might some of you be useful if you did but live up to your privileges! Ah, my Brethren, how the Comforter must surely grieve over those of us who are ministers, when He sets us as watchmen and we do not watch and the Church is invaded! When He commissions us as sowers of the good seed, and our hands are only half filled, or we scatter cockle and darnel instead of sowing the good wheat! How must He grieve over us because we have not that tenderness of heart, that melting of love, that vehemence of zeal, that earnestness of soul which we ought to exhibit! When the Church of God suffers damage through usthe Spirit loves the Church and cannot endure to see her robbed and despoiled, her children left to wander, her wounded sons unsuccored, and her broken hearts unhealedbecause we are indifferent to our work, and careless in our labor for the Church, the Holy Spirit is much displeased.

But it is not only with ministers, but with all of you, for there is a niche that each of you should fill. And if that is vacant the Church loses by youthe kingdom of Christ suffers damage, the revenue which ought to come into Zion is cut shortand the Holy Spirit is grieved. Your lack of prayer, your lack of love, your deficiency in generosityall these may be sad injuries to the Church of Godand therefore is the loving Spirit of God much disquieted once more. The Spirit of God mourns over the shortcomings of Christians for sinners sakes, for it is the Spirits office to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. But the course of many Believers is directly counter to this work of the Spirit. Their lives do not convict the world of sin, but rather tend to comfort transgressors in their iniquity.

We have heard the actions of professors quoted by worldlings as an excuse for their sins. Openly profane persons have said, Look at those Christians! They do so-and-so, why may not we? It is ill when Jerusalem comforts Sodom, and when the crimes of the heathens find precedents in the sins of Israel! It is the Spirits work to convict the world of righteousness, but many a professor convicts the world of the opposite. No, says the world, there is no more righteousness to be had in Christ than anywhere else, for, look at those who follow Him, or pretend to do sowhere is their righteousness? It does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

The Spirit of Truth convicts the world of judgment to comebut how few of us help Him in that great work! We live and act and talk as if there were no judgment to cometoiling for wealth as if this world were all careless of souls, as though Hell were a dream! Unmoved by eternal realities, unstirred by the terrors of the Lord, indifferent to the ruin of mankind, many professors live like worldlings and are as unchristian as infidels. This is an indisputable fact, but one to be lamented with tears of blood! Brothers and Sisters, I dare not think how much of the ruin of the world must be laid at the door of the Church! But I will dare to say this, that although the Divine purposes will be fulfilled, and God will not miss the number of His chosen, yet the fact that this London of ours is now rather a heathen than a Christian city can be laid at no ones door but that of the professing Church of God and her ministers!

Where else can it be? Is the city wrapped in darkness? It need not have been so. If we had been faithful it would not have been so! If we are faithful in the future it shall not long remain so. I cannot imagine an Apostolic Church, set down in the midst of London, and filled with the ardor of the first disciples, remaining long without influencing sensibly upon the masses. I know the increase of our population is immenseI know that we are adding every year a fresh town to this overgrown city. But I will notI dare not tolerate the idea that the zeal of Gods Church, if at its right pitch, is too feeble to meet the case! No, there is wealth enough among us, if it were consecrated, to build as many Houses of Prayer as shall be needed.

There is ability enough among us, if it were but given to the ministry of the Word, to yield a sufficiency of preachers of the Cross. We have all the pecuniary and mental strength that is needed. The point in which we fail is thiswe are straitened in spiritual power! Poverty-stricken in Divine Grace! Lukewarm in zeal, meager in devotedness, staggering in faith. We are not straitened in our God, we are straitened in our own hearts. Brethren, I believe the Spirit of God is very greatly grieved with many Churches for the sake of the sinners in their congregations who are scarcely cared for, seldom prayed for, never wept for. Would that the thought of this might move us and our Brethren to mend our ways.

II. Secondly, let us refer to DEPLORABLE CAUSES which produce the grief of the Holy Spirit. The context is some assistance to us. We learn that sins of the flesh, filthiness, and evil speaking of every sort, are grievous to Him. Note the preceding verse: Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Let a Christian fall into the habit of talking in a loose, unchaste style. Let him delight in things that are indecorous, even if he shall not plunge into the commission of outward uncleanness, and the Spirit of God will not be pleased with him.

The Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord as a Dove. And a dove delights in the pure rivers of water and shuns all kinds of filthiness. In Noahs day the dove found no place for the sole of its feet on all the carcasses floating in the waste. And even so, the heavenly Dove finds no repose in the dead and corrupt things of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, we shall not obey the desires of the flesh. They who walk after the flesh know nothing of the Spirit. It appears, from the thirty-first verse, that the Holy Spirit is grieved by any approach to bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking and malice.

If in a Christian Church there shall be dissensions and divisions. If Brother shall speak evil of Brother, and Sister of Sister, love is absentand the Spirit of love will not long be present. The dove is the emblem of peace. One of the early fruits of the Spirit is peace. My dear Friends, I hope as a Church if there is any secret ill feeling among us, any hidden root of bitternesseven though it may not yet have sprung up to trouble usit may be removed and destroyed at once! I do not know of any such abominable thing, and am happy to be able to say so. I trust we walk together in holy unity and concord of heart. If any of you are conscious of bitterness in ever so small a measure, purge it out lest the Spirit of God be grieved with you and grieved with the Church of God for your sake.

I have no doubt it greatly grieves the Spirit to see in Believers any degree of love of the world. His holy jealousy is excited by such unholy love. If a mother should see her child fonder of someone else than of herif she should know that it was more happy in the company of a stranger than when in the bosom of its own parentshe would feel it a very hard trial to bear. Now the Spirit of God gives to Believers celestial joys and abounding comforts. And if He sees us turn our back upon all these to go into worldly company, to feed greedily upon the same empty joys which satisfy worldlings, He is a jealous God and He takes it as a great slight put upon Himself.

What? Does the Good Shepherd load the table with Heavens own dainties, and do we prefer to devour the husks which the swine eat? When I think of a Christian man trying to find his enjoyment where the lowest of worldlings find theirs, I can scarcely imagine him to be a Christian! Or, if he is, he must very greatly grieve the Spirit of God. Why, you set the world, which you profess to have found empty, vain, and deceitfulyou set that before the choice things of the kingdom of Grace! And while you profess to be, raised up to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, you still grovel in the dust as others do!

What does the world say? Ah, ah, they say, Here is one of those Christian people coming after a little happiness! Poor soul! His religion gives him no joy and, therefore, he is looking for a little elsewhere. Make room for him, poor fellow, he has a hard time of it on Sundays. Then the notion goes abroad that Christians have no joy in Christ! That we have to deny ourselves all true happiness and only get a little delight by stealth, when we do as others do. What a libel is this! And yet how many professors are responsible for it! If we live in communion with Jesus we shall not hanker after the world. We shall despise its mirth and trample on its treasures. Worldliness, in any shape, must be very grievous to the Spirit of Godnot only the love of

pleasure, but the love of gain.

Worldliness in Christian men and women in imitating the world in dressworldliness in luxury, or in conversationmust displease the Spirit of God because He calls us a peculiar people, and He tells us to, come out from among them and be separated, and touch not the unclean thing. And then He promises, I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters. And if we will not be separate how can we expect Him to be otherwise than grieved? Israel was constrained to quit Egypt for the wilderness, and God said, I remember you, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.

He seems to dote upon Israels early separation to Himself! And so I believe the Lord delights to see His people severing fond connections, giving up carnal pleasures, and going outside the camp bearing the reproach of Christ. It ravishes the heart of Jesus to see His Church forsake the world! Here are His own words to His bride, Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your fathers house; so shall the king greatly desire your beauty. He loves to have His saints entirely to Himself! He is a jealous Savior, and hence Paul says he labored that he might, present the Church as a chaste virgin unto Christ.

Jesus wants to have our chastity to Himself maintained beyond suspicion that we may choose Him as our sole possession, and leave the base things of the earth to those who love them. Beware, my Brothers and Sisters, of grieving the Holy Spirit by worldliness! Moreover, the Spirit of God is greatly grieved by unbelief. What would grieve you more, dear Friend, than to have your child suspect your truthfulness? Alas, cries the father, Can it have come to this, that my own child will not believe me? Is my promise to be thrown in my teeth and am I to be told by my own son, My father, I cannot trust you?

It is not come to that with any of us, as parents, yet, and shall it be so with our God? Alas, it has been! We have done despite to the Spirit of Truth by doubting the promise and mistrusting the faithfulness of God! Of all sins, surely this must be one of the most provoking. If there is the virus of diabolical guilt in anything, it must be in the unbeliefnot of sinnersbut of Gods own people! Sinners have never seen what saints have seennever felt what we have felt, never known what we have knownand, therefore, if they should doubt, they do not sin against such light, nor do despite to such invincible arguments for confidence as we do. God forgive our unbelief, and may we never grieve His Spirit anymore!

Further, the Spirit is doubtless grieved by our ingratitude. When Jesus reveals His love to us, if we go away from the chamber of fellowship to talk lightly and forget that love. Or if, when we have been raised up from a sickbed we are no more consecrated than before. Or if, when our bread is given us and our water is sure, our heart never thanks the bounteous Giver. Or if, when preserved under temptation we fail to magnify the Lordsurely this, in each case, must be a God-provoking sin! If we add pride to ingratitude we sorely grieve the blessed Spirit. When a saved sinner grows proud he insults the wisdom of the Spirit of God by his folly, for what can there be in us to be proud of?

Pride is a weed which will grow in any soil. Proud of the mercies of God? As well be proud of being in debt! Why, some of us are so foolish that God cannot exalt us, for if He did we should straightway grow dizzy in the brain, and should be sure to fall! If the Lord were to put so much as one gold piece of comfort into our pockets, we should think ourselves so rich that we should set up in business on our own account, and cease from dependence upon Him! He cannot indulge us with a little joyHe has to keep us as the father in the parable did the elder brother, who complained, You never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.

Oh it is sad that we should be so foolish as to become proud of our graces! This is a great grief to the Spirit in a private person, and even more so when it becomes the fault of an entire Church. If you as a Church shall boast that you are numerous, or generous, or rich, it will be all over with you. God will abase those who exalt themselves! If your soul can make her boast in the Lord, you may boast as much as you will. But if you glory in anything else, God will hide His face, and you will be troubled though your mountain once stood so firm that you dreamed it could never be moved. I cannot give you a full list of all the evils which grieve the Spirit of God, but let me mention here, particularly, onea lack of prayer.

This is grievous, either in the Church or in an individual. Does not this touch some of you? How little do some of us pray! Let each conscience now be its own accuser. My dear Brother, how about the Mercy Seat? How about the closet and secret communion with God? How about wrestling for your children? How about pleading for the pastor? Have you not been backward in interceding for the conversion of your neighbor? Could you read the story of Abrahams interceding for Sodom and say that you have interceded for London like that? Can you read of Jacob at the brook Jabbok, and say that you ever spent an hour, much less a night, in wrestling with the Angel? The prayerlessness of this age is one of its worst signs, and the prayerlessness of some of our Christian Churches looks as if God were about to withdraw Himself from the land!

In many Churches, as I am told, they have a difficulty in getting enough men to attend the Prayer Meetings to carry them on. I know of someTell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon!I know of some Churches that have given up Prayer Meetings because nobody comes! Ah, if this case were a solitary one, it ought to be daily mourned overbut there are scores of Churches in the same conditionthe Lord have mercy upon them and upon the land in which such Churches dwell!

To sum up many things which might be said, I think the Holy Spirit will be grieved with any one of us if we shall indulge any known sin, let it be what it may. And I will add to that, if any one of us shall neglect any known duty, let it be what it may. I cannot imagine the Spirit of God being pleased with a Brother who knows his Masters will, and does it not. I know the Word says that he shall be beaten with many stripes. Surely, beating with stripes must be the result of grief on the part of the hand that administers such stripes. Let any person or any Church know good and do it not, and to him or to it, it shall be sin! And that which might not be sin in the ignorant, will become sin to those blessed with light.

As soon as your conscience is enlightened and you know the path of duty, you need not say, Others ought to do it, (so they should, but to their own Master they must stand or fall). If your judgment is enlightened, make haste and delay not to keep the Commandments of God. John Owen, in his treatise upon the Holy Spirit, makes a remark that he believes the Spirit of God was greatly grieved in England by the public affirmation in the articles of the doctrine that the Church of God has power to decree rites and ceremonies for herself. Gods Word is the only rule of Gods Church. Inasmuch as the Church of England, so called, claims to be her own lawmaker, she has grieved the Spirit!

When a Church claims to itself the right to judge what are to be its own ordinances instead of willingly and obediently acknowledging that she has no right of choice whateverbut is bound to obey the revealed will of her Great Headshe sins terribly! It is the duty of all Christians to search the Word as to what are the ordinances which God has fixed and commanded. And being once clear as to the rule of the Word, it is ours to obey it! If you see infant Baptism in the Word, do not neglect it! If it is not there, do not regard it!

Here I must give utterance to a thought which has long followed me. Perhaps the present sad condition of the Christian Church, and the prevalence of the dogma of baptismal regeneration, may be traceable to the neglect that reigns in the Church almost universally with regard to the great Christian ordinance of Believers Baptism. Men laugh at all talk about this as if the question were of no importance. But I take leave to say that whatever may be the Truth of God upon that ordinance, it is worth every Believers while to find it out.

I meet constantly with people who have no sort of faith in infant Baptism, and have long ago given it up. And yet, though they admit that they ought to be baptized as Believers, they neglect the duty as unimportant. Now mark itwhen the Last Great Day shall reveal all things, I am persuaded it will reveal thisthat the Churchs supplanting the Baptism of Believers by that of infants was not only a great means in the original establishment of Popery, but that the maintenance of the perverted ordinance in our Protestant Church is the chief root and cause of the present revival of Popery in this land.

If we would lay the axe to the roots of Sacramentarianism, we must go back to the old Scriptural method of giving ordinances to Believers onlythe ordinances after faithnot before faith. We must give up baptizing in order to regenerate and administer it to those alone who profess to be already regenerate. When we all come to this we shall hear no more of baptismal regeneration, and a thousand other false doctrines will vanish away. Lay down the rule that unbelievers have no right to Church ordinances, and you put it out of the power of men to establish the unhallowed institution of a State Church! For, mark you, no National Church is possible on the principle of Believers Baptisma principle much too exclusive to suit the mixed multitude of a whole nation.

A State Church must hold to infant Baptism! Necessarily it must receive all the members of the State into its numberit must or else it cannot expect the

pay of the State. Make the Church a body consisting only of professedly faithful men, believers in the Lord Jesus, and let the Church say to all others, You have no part nor lot in this matter until you are converted, and there is the end of the unholy alliance between the Church and the world which is now a withering blight upon our land. Errors of doctrine, practice, and polity may cause the dew of Heaven to be withheld. You will say, Such errors did not hinder revivals in other days!

Perhaps not, but God does not always wink at our ignorance. In these days no one needs to be ignorant about the mystery of baptismal regenerationthe error has worked itself to its full development and reached such a climax that every Christian man ought to give it his most earnest consideration. Guilt will come upon us if we are not earnest in seeking out the roots of an evil which is the cause of such deadly mischief in the land. If, as a Church, we are clear in our testimony on this point, I entreat you to see if there is any other error with which you may be charged. Is there a part of Scripture which we have not attended to? Is there a Truth of God which we have neglected? Let us hold ourselves ready to relinquish our most cherished opinions at the commands of Scripture, whatever they may be.

I say to you what I say to othersif the form of our Church government, if the manner of our administration of Christian ordinances, if the doctrines we hold are unwarranted by the Word of Godlet us be faithful to our consciences and to the Word and be ready to alter, according to our light. Let us give up the idea of stereotyping anything! Let us be ready at any moment and every moment to do just what the Spirit of God would have us do! For if not, we may not expect the Spirit of God to abide with us. O for a heart to serve God perfectly! O that such a heart were given to all His people so that they were ready to renounce authority, antiquity, taste, opinion, and bow before the Holy Spirit alone! May the Church yet come to walk by the simple rule of Gods Book and by the light of Gods Spirit, and then shall we cease to grieve the Holy Spirit!

III. Thirdly, and very brieflymuch too brieflyTHE LAMENTABLE RESULT of the Spirits being grieved. In the child of God it will not lead to his utter destruction, for no heir of Heaven can perish. Neither will the Holy Spirit be utterly taken away from him, for the Spirit of God is given to abide with us forever. But the ill-effects are nevertheless most terrible. You will lose, my dear Friends, all sense of the Holy Spirits PresenceHe will be as one hidden from youno beams of comfort, no words of peace, no thoughts of love.

There will be what Cowper calls, an aching void which the world can never fill. Grieve the Holy Spirit and you will lose all Christian joy. The light shall be taken from you and you shall stumble in darkness. Those very means of Divine Grace which once were such a delight shall have no music in your ears. Your soul shall be no longer as a watered garden, but as a howling wilderness. Grieve the Spirit of God, and you will lose all power. If you pray, it will be a very weak prayeryou will not prevail with God. When you read the Scriptures you shall not be able to lift the latch and force your way into the inner mysteries of the Truth of God.

When you go up to the House of God, there shall be none of that devout exhilaration, that running without weariness, that walking without fainting. You shall feel yourself like Samson when his hair was lostweak, captive, and blind. Let the Holy Spirit depart and assurance is gone! Doubts follow, questions and suspicions are aroused

*Do I love the Lord or no?   
Am I His, or am I not?*

Grieve the Spirit of God, and usefulness will cease. The ministry shall yield no fruit. Your Sunday school work shall be barren. Your speaking to others and laboring for others souls shall be like sowing the wind. Let a Church grieve the Spirit of God, and oh, the blights that shall come and wither her fair garden! Then her days of solemn assembly shall have no acceptance with Heaven! Her sons, although all of them ordained as priests unto God, shall have no acceptable incense to offer.

Let the Church grieve the Spirit, and she shall fail to bless the age in which she lives. She shall cast no light into the surrounding darkness. No sinners shall be saved by her means. There shall be few additions to her number. Her missionaries shall cease to go forth. There shall be no marriage feasts of communion in her house. Darkness and death shall reign where all was joy and life. Brothers and Sisters, Beloved in the Lord, may the Lord prevent us from grieving His Spirit as a Church, but may we be earnest, zealous, truthful, united, and holy so that we may retain among us this heavenly Guest who will leave us if we grieve Him.

IV. Lastly, there is one PERSONAL ARGUMENT which is used in the text to forbid our grieving the Spirit Whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. What does this mean? There are many meanings assigned by different commentators. We shall be content with the followingA seal is set upon a thing to attest its authenticity and authority. By what can I know that I am truly what I profess to be a Christian by profession? How do I know whether I am really a Christian or not? God sets a seal on every genuine Believerwhat is it? It is the possession of the Holy Spirit of God!

If you have the Holy Spirit, my dear Friend, that is Gods seal set upon you that you are His child! Do you not see, then, that if you grieve the Spirit you lose your seal, and you are like a commission with the seal torn away? You are like a note of hand without a signature! Your evidence of being Gods child is the Spirit, for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His. If you have not the Spirit in you, that will be decisive evidence for you that you do not belong to Christ, for you lack the groundwork of true assurance, which is the indwelling Presence, power, and enjoyment of the Spirit.

Moreover, I have said a seal is used for attestation, and so it is, not only to you, but to others. You say to the world around, I am a child of God. How are they to know it? They can only judge as you must judge yourself, by looking for the seal. If you possess the Spirit of God, they will soon see you to be a Christian. If you have it not, whatever else you have, you will soon be discovered to be a forgery, for you lack the seal. Beloved, all Church history proves this, that when the Christian Church has been filled with the Spirit of God, the world has confessed her pedigree because it could not help doing so. But when the Church has lost her enthusiasm and fervor because she has lost the heavenly fire, then the world has asked, What is this Christian Church more than the synagogue of the Jews, or the company of Mahomet?

The world knows Gods seal! And if it does not see it, it soon despises that society which pretends to be the Church of God and has not the mark and proof of it. The same truth holds good in all cases. For instance, in the matter of the Christian ministry. When I first came to minister in London there was some little talk about my being ordained. If I am ordained of God, I do not need human ordination. And if, on the other band, God has not called me to the work, no man or set of men can do it. But it was said, You must have a recognition service, that others may signify their approval!

No, I said, if God is with me, they will recognize me quickly enough as a man of God. And if the Lords Presence is denied me, human approval is of little worth. Brethren, if you profess to be called to any form of ministry, your only way of proving your call will be by showing the seal of the Spirit! When that seal is affixed to your labors, you will require no other recognition! The camp of Dan soon recognized Samson when the Spirit came upon him, and when he went among his enemiesthe Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, they soon recognized him as they saw him piling the slain heaps upon heaps!

This is how the Christian man or minister must compel the recognition of his status and call. Knights of the Cross must win their spurs upon the battlefield. The only way for a Christian to be discerned to be a Christian, or for a Church to be manifested as a Church of God is by having the Spirit of God, and in the name of the Spirit of God doing exploits for God and bringing glory to His holy name! Once more, a seal is used for preserving, as well as for attesting. The Easterner seals up his moneybags to secure the gold within, and we seal our letters to guard the enclosure. A seal is set for security.

Now, Beloved, as the only way by which you can be known to be a Christian is by really possessing the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, so, also, the only way by which you can be kept a Christian, and preserved from going back to the world is by still possessing that same Holy Spirit. What are you if the Spirit of God is gone? Salt that has lost its savor. With what can you be salted? Trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots...wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. The Holy Spirit is not to you a luxury, but a necessityyou must have Him or you dieyou must have Him, or you are damned! Yes, and with a double damnation.

Here comes in this choice promise that the Lord will not leave you, and will not forsake youbut if He did leave you forever, there would remain no more sacrifice for sinit would be impossible to renew you again unto repentance, seeing that you would have crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. Grieve not, then, that Spirit upon whom you are so dependent! He is your credentials as a Christian! He is your life as a Believer! Prize Him beyond all price! Speak of Him with bowed head, with reverent awe! Rest upon Him with childlike, loving confidence! Obey His faintest monitionsneglect not His inward whispers. Turn not aside from His teachings in the Word, or by His ministers.

And be as ready to feel His power as the waves of the sea are to be moved by the wind, or a feather to be wafted by the gale. Hold yourselves ready to do His bidding. As the eyes of the handmaiden are to her mistress, so let your eyes be unto Him. When you know His will, ask no questions, count no costs, dare all hazards, defy all circumstances! Let the will of the Spirit be your absolute law, apart from gain or loss, apart from your own judgment or your own taste. Let the will of the Spirit, when once plainly perceived by you, be instantly obeyed, and try to perceive that will. Do not willfully shut your eyes to an unpleasant duty, or close your understanding to an unwelcome Truth. Lean not to your own understanding! Consider that the Holy Spirit alone can teach you, and that those who will not be taught of Him must remain hopelessly foolish.

Oh, if I might but live to see the Church of God recognize the power of the Holy Spirit! If I could but see her cast aside the grave clothes which she has so long persisted in wearing! If I could see her put no confidence in State or powerrely no longer upon eloquence and learning! If I could see her depend upon the Holy Spirit, even though her ministers should again be fishermen and her followers should again be the base things of this world, and the things that are not! Even though she should have to be baptized in blood. Even though the Man-Child should excite the dragons wrath and he should pour floods out against heryet the day of her final victory would have dawnedif she did but obey the Spirit!

If only her directories, creeds, rules, prayer books, rubrics, and canons were cast to the winds, and the free Spirit of the living God ruled everywhere! If, instead of the decrees of her councils and the slavish bondage of priestcraft and ritual, she would only embrace the liberty with which Christ has made her free, and walk according to His Word and the teachings of her heavenly Teacherthen might we hear the shout of the King in our midst, and the battlements of error would fall! God send it, and send it in our time, and His shall be praise!

I fear there are some here who do not grieve the Spirit, but do worse than thatthey quench the Spiritthey resist the Spirit. May the Lord grant them forgiveness of this great sin, and may they be led to the Cross of Christ to find pardon for every sin! At the Cross, and there alone, can everlasting life be found. God bless you for Jesus sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1448 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FORGIVENESS MADE EASY   
NO. 1448

DELIVERED BY C.H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. Forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32.

THE heathen moralists, when they wished to teach virtue, could not point to the example of their gods, for, according to their mythologists, the gods were a compound of every imaginable and, I had almost said, unimaginable vice! Many of the classic deities surpassed the worst of men in their crimesthey were as much greater in iniquity as they were supposed to be superior in power. It is an ill day for a people when their gods are worse than themselves! The blessed purity of our holy faith is conspicuous, not only in its precepts, but in the Character of the God whom it reveals. There is no excellency which we can propose but we can see it brightly shining in the Lord our God! There is no line of conduct in which a Believer should excel but we can point to Christ Jesus our Lord and Master as the pattern of it! In the highest places of the Christian faith, you have the highest virtue and unto God our Father and the Lord Jesus be the highest praise.

We can urge you to the most tender spirit of forgiveness by pointing to God who, for Christs sake, has forgiven you. What nobler motive can you require for forgiving one another? With such high examples, Brothers and Sisters, what manner of people ought we to be? We have sometimes heard of men who were better than their religion, but that is quite impossible with uswe can never, in spirit or in act, rise to the sublime elevation of our divine religion. We should constantly be rising above ourselves and above the most gracious of our fellow Christians and yet above us we would still behold our God and Savior. We may go from strength to strength in thoughts of goodness and duties of piety, but Jesus is higher, still, and evermore we must be looking up to Him as we climb the sacred hill of Grace.

At this time we wish to speak a little concerning the duties of love and forgiveness and here we note, at once, that the Apostle sets before us the example of God, Himself. Upon that bright example we shall spend most of our time, but I hope not quite so much as to forget the practical part which is so much needed in these days by certain unforgiving spirits who nevertheless assume the Christian name. The theme of Gods forgiving love is so fascinating that we may linger awhileand a long while, too upon that bright example of forgiveness which God has set before us, but from it all I hope we shall be gathering Grace by which to forgive others even to 70 times seven. We shall take the text, phrase by phrase, and so we shall obtain the clearest divisions.

I. The first phrase to think about is, FOR CHRISTS SAKE. We use these words very often, but probably we have never thought of their force.

And even at this time we cannot bring forth the whole of their meaning. Let us touch thereon with thoughtfulness, praying the good Spirit to instruct us. For Christs sake. All the good things which God has bestowed upon us have come to us, for Christs sake. But especially the forgiveness of our sins has come, for Christs sake. This is the plain assertion of the text. What does it mean? It means, surely, first, for the sake of the great Atonement which Christ has offered.

The great God can, as a just Lawgiver and King, readily pass by our offenses because of the expiation for sin which Christ has offered. If sin were merely a personal affront toward God, we have abundant evidence that He would be ready enough to pass it by without exacting vengeance but it is a great deal more than that. Those who view it as a mere personal affront against God are but very shallow thinkers. Sin is an attack upon the moral government of God. It undermines the foundations of society and were it permitted to have its way, it would reduce everything to anarchy and even destroy the governing power and Ruler, Himself.

God has a great realm to govern, not merely of men that dwell on the face of the earth, but beneath His sway there are angels, principalities, powers and we know not how many worlds of intelligent beings! It would certainly be a monstrous thing to suppose that God has made yonder myriads of worlds that we see sparkling in the sky at night without having placed some living creatures in themit is far more reasonable to suppose that this earth is an altogether insignificant speck in the Divine dominiona mere province in the boundless empire of the King of kings.

Now, this world, having rebelled against God high-handedly, as it has done, unless there were a satisfaction demanded for its rebellion, would be a tolerated assault upon the dominion of the great Judge of all and a lowering of His royal influence over all His domain. If sin in mans case were left unpunished it would soon be known through myriads of worlds and, in fact, by ten thousand times ten thousand races of creatures, that they might sin with impunity. If one race had done so, why not all the rest? This would be a proclamation of universal license to rebel. It would probably be the worst calamity that could happenthat any sin should go unpunished by the supreme Judge. Sometimes in a state, unless the lawgiver executes the law against the murderer, life will be in peril and everything will become insecure and, therefore, it becomes mercy to write the death warrant.

So is it with God in reference to this world of sinners. It is His very love as well as His holiness and His justice which, if I may use such a term, compels Him to severity of judgment so that sin cannot and must not be blotted out till atonement has been presented. There must, first of all, be a sacrifice for sin, which, mark you, the great Father, to show His love, suppliesfor it is His own Son who is given to die! And so the Father Himself supplies the ransom through His Son, that Son being, also, One with Himself by bonds of essential unity, mysterious but most intense. If God demands the penalty in justice, He, Himself, supplies it in love. It

is a wondrous mystery, this mystery of the way of salvation by an atoning Sacrifice, but this much is clear, that God, for Christs sake, has forgiven us, because satisfaction has been made to the injured honor of the Divine government and justice is satisfied.

I want you to consider, for a moment, how readily God may now blot out sin since Christ has died. The blotting out of sin seems hard till we see the Cross and then it appears easy enough. I have looked at sin till it seemed to blind me with its horror and I said to myself, This damned spot can never be washed out; no fullers soap can change its hue; sooner might the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots. O Sin, you deep, eternal evil, what can remove you? And then I have seen the Son of God dying on the Cross and read the anguish of His soul and heard the cries which showed the torment of His spirit when God, His Father, had forsaken Himand it has seemed to me as if the blotting out of sin were the easiest thing under Heaven!

When I have seen Jesus die I have not been able to understand how any sin could be difficult to remove. Let a man stand on Calvary and look on Him whom he has piercedand believe and accept the Atonement madeand it becomes the simplest thing possible that his debt should be discharged now that it is paid, that his freedom should be given now that the ransom is found and that he should be no longer under condemnation, since the guilt that condemned him has been carried away by his great Substitute and Lord! It is because of what Jesus Christ has suffered in our place that God, for Christs sake, has forgiven us.

The second rendering of the text would be thisthat God has forgiven us because of the representative Character of Christ. It should never be forgotten that we originally fell by a representative. Adam stood for us and he was our federal head. We did not fall, personally, at the first, but in our representative. Had he kept the conditions of the Covenant, we would have stood through him, but, inasmuch as he fell, we fell in him. I pray you do not quibble at the arrangement, because there lies the hope of our race! The angels probably fell individually, one by one, and hence they fell irretrievablythere was no restoring them.

But as we fell in one Adam, there remained the possibility of our rising in another Adam and, therefore, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son Jesus Christ, born of a woman, made under the Law to become the Second Adam! He undertook to remove our burdens and to fulfill the conditions of our restoration. According to the Covenant, He must appear in our nature and that nature, in the fullness of time, He assumed. He must bear the penaltythat He has done in His personal suffering and death. He must obey the Lawthat He has done to the utmost. And now Christ Jesus, having borne the penalty and fulfilled the Law, is, Himself justified before God and stands forth before God as the Representative of all that are in Him.

God, for Christs sake, has accepted us in Him, has forgiven us in Him and looks upon us with infinite love and changeless in Him. This is how all our blessings come to usin and through Christ Jesus! And if we are, indeed, in Him, the Lord does not only forgive us our sins, but He bestows upon us the boundless riches of His Grace in Him. In fact, He treats us as He would treat His SonHe deals with us as He would deal with Jesus! Oh, how pleasant to think that when the just God looks upon us, it is through the reconciling mediumHe views us through the Mediator. We

sometimes sing a hymn which says  *Him and then the sinner see,   
Look through Jesus wounds on me,*

and this is just what the Lord does. He counts us just for the sake of our Saviors Atonement and because of His representative Character!

Now go a little further. When we read, for Christs sake, it surely means for the deep love which the Father bears Him. My Brothers and Sisters, can you guess, even, a little of the love which the Father has toward the Only-Begotten? We cannot pry into the wondrous mystery of the eternal filiation of the Son of God lest we are blinded by excess of light, but this we know, that they are one GodFather, Son and Holy Spirit and the union which exists between them is intense beyond conception. The Father loves the Son, was always true and is true now! But how deeply, how intensely He loves the Son, no mind can conceive!

Now, Brethren, the Lord will do great things for the sake of a Son whom He loves as He loves Jesus, for in addition to the fact of His eternally loving Him, as being one with Him by Nature and Essence, there is now the superadded cause of love arising out of what the Lord Jesus has done as the Servant of the Father. Remember that our Lord Jesus has been obedient to His Fathers willobedient to death, even to the death of the Crosstherefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name. One of the sweetest thoughts, to my mind, which I sometimes suck at when I am alone, is thisthat God the Father will do anything for Christ. Here is also another piece of a honeycombwhen I can plead Christs name I am sure to win my suit because of Him. For Christs sake is a plea that always touches the heart of the great God.

Prove that for you to receive such-and-such a blessing will glorify Christ and the Father cannot withhold it, for it is His delight to honor Jesus! We speak after the manner of men, of course, and on such a theme as this we must be careful, but still, we can only speak as men, being only men. It is the joy of the Father to express His love to His Son. Throughout all ages they have had fellowship, One with Anotherthey have always been One in all their designsthey have never differed upon any point and cannot differ! And you notice when our Lord says, Father, glorify Your Son, He is so knit with the Father that He adds, that Your Son may also glorify You. Their mutual love is inconceivably great and, therefore, Brothers and Sisters, God will do anything for Jesus.

God will forgive us for Christs sake. Yes, He has done so in the case of thousands around me. And you, big evil sinner, if you will go to God at this moment and say, Lord, I cannot ask You to forgive me for my own sake, but do it out of love for Your dear Son, He will do it, for He will do anything for the sake of Jesus! If you are, at this time, conscious of sin so as to despair of yourself, it is well that you should be so, for self-despair is only common sense, since there is nothing in yourself upon which you can rely. But do catch at this hopeit is not a straw, it is a good substantial life-buoyif you can ask forgiveness for the sake of Jesus, God will do anything for Jesus and so He will do anything for you for His dear sake!

So we read our text once more in the light of a Truth of God which grows out of the love of God, namely that God forgives sin for the sake of glorifying Christ. Christ took the shame that He might magnify His Father and now His Father delights to magnify Him by blotting out the sin. If you can prove that any gift to you would reflect glory upon Christ, you may depend upon it, you will have it! If there is anything under Heaven that would make Christ more illustrious, the Father would not spare it for a moment! If you see that for you to have your sin forgiven would raise the fame of the Savior, go and plead that argument with God and you shall surely prevail! Will it not make Christ glad if He saves such a sinner as you are? Then go with this argument in your mouth, Father, glorify Your Son by exalting Him as a glorious Savior in saving me.

I find this often a great lever at a dead liftto say unto the Lord, Lord, You know the straits I am in. You know how undeserving I am. You know what a poor, undone creature I am before You. But if Your dear Son shall help and save me, the very angels will stand and wonder at His mighty Grace! And so it will bring glory to Him and, therefore, I entreat You to be gracious to me. You can be certain to prevail if you can plead that it will glorify Christ and surely you would not wish to have a thing that would not glorify Him! Your prayer shall always be prevalent if your heart is in such a state that you are willing to have or not to have according as it will honor your Lord! If it will not glorify Christ, be more than content to do without the choicest earthly good. But be you doubly grateful when the gift that is granted tends to bring honor to the ever dear and worshipful name of Jesus. For Christs sake. It is a precious phrasedwell upon it and then lay up this sentence in the archives of your memorythe Father will do anything for the sake of Jesus Christ His Son.

II. Now, secondly, we pass on to observe what it is which we are told in the text has been done for us and to us, for Christs sake. God for Christs sake HAS FORGIVEN YOU. First notice that He has done this certainly. The Apostle does not say he hopes so, but he says, God for Christs sake has forgiven you. Are you in the number of the forgiven, my dear Hearer? Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then, as sure as you have believed, God for Christs sake has forgiven you! Have you put your trust in the atoning Sacrifice? Then God for Christs sake has forgiven you! You have not begun to be a Christian, I hope, with the idea that one day, at some future period, you may obtain forgiveness. No. God for Christs sake has forgiven you.

Pardon is not a prize to be run for, but a blessing received at the first step of the race! If you have believed in Jesus your sins are all goneall goneall your sins have been erased from the records of the past, never to be mentioned against you forever! The moment a sinner looks to Christ, the burden of his sins rolls from off his shoulders never to return. If Christ has washed you, (and He has if you have believed in Him), then you are clean every whit and before the Lord you stand delivered from every trace of guilt! Pardon is not a matter of hope, but a matter of FACT. Expectation looks for many a blessing, but pardon is a realized favor which Faith holds in her hand even now.   
If Christ took your load, your load cannot remain on your own backif

Christ paid your debts, then they do not stand in Gods books against you. How can they? It stands to reason that if your Substitute has taken your sins and put them away, your sins lay no more on you. God for Christs sake has forgiven you. Get hold of that grand Truth of God and hold it, though all the devils in Hell roar at you! Grasp it as with a hand of steel! Grip it as for lifeGod for Christs sake has forgiven meand may each one of us be able to say that. We shall not feel the Divine sweetness and force of the text unless we can make a personal matter of it by the Holy Spirit.

Then notice that God has forgiven us continuously. He not only forgave us, at the first, all our sins, but He continues daily to forgive, for the act of forgiveness is a continuous one. I have sometimes heard it said that we were so forgiven when we first believed that there is no need to ask for further forgiveness. I replyWe were so completely forgiven when we first believed that we ought continually to ask for the perpetuity of that one farreaching act, that the Lord may continue to exert towards us that fullness of forgiving Grace which absolved us perfectly at the first, that we may continue to walk before Him with a sense of that complete forgiveness, clear and unquestioned.

I know I was forgiven when first I believed in Christ. And I am equally sure of it nowthe one absolution continues to ring in my ears like joyous bells which never cease. Pardon once given continues to be given. When, through doubt and anxiety, I was not sure of my pardon, yet it was still true, for he that believes on Him is not condemned, even though he may write bitter things against himself. Beloved Friend, catch hold of that and do not let it go! Divine pardon is a continuous actand this forgiveness on Gods part was most free. We did nothing to obtain it by merit and we brought nothing with which to purchase it! He forgave us for Christs sake, not for anything that

we had done.

True, we did repent and believebut repentance and faith He gave us, so that He did not forgive us for the sake of them, but purely of His own dear love because He delights in mercy and is never more like Himself than when He passes by transgression, iniquity and sin. Remember, also, that He forgave us fully. It was not here and there a sin that He blotted out, but the whole horrible list and catalog of our offenses He destroyed at once! The substitution of our Lord has finished that matter even to perfection

*Because the sinless Savior died,   
My sinful soul is counted free,   
For God, the Just, is satisfied   
To look on Him and pardon me.*

All our transgressions are swept away at once, carried off as by a flood and so completely removed from us that no guilty trace of them remains. They are all gone!

O you Believers, think of this, for the all is no little thingsins against a holy God, sins against His loving Son, sins against Gospel as well as against Law, sins against man as well as against God, sins of the body as well as sins of the mind, sins as numerous as the sands on the sea shore and as great as the sea itselfall, ALL are removed from us as far as the east is from the west! All this evil was rolled into one great mass and laid upon Jesusand having borne it all, He has made an end of it forever. When the Lord forgave us He forgave us the whole debt. He did not take the bill and say, I strike out this item and that, but the pen went through it allPAID. It was a receipt in full of all demands. Jesus took the handwriting which was against us and nailed it to His Cross to show before the entire universe that its power to condemn us had ceased forever. We have in Him a full forgiveness.

And let it be remembered that this forgiveness which God has given us for Christs sake is an eternal forgiveness. He will never rake up our past offenses and a second time impute them. He will not find us on an evil day and say, I have had great patience with you, but now I will deal with you after your sins. Far from it! He that believes in Jesus has everlasting life and shall never come into condemnation! Irreversible is the pardon of Heaven. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He never repents what He has given, or forgiven. Tis done, tis done forever Jehovah absolves and the sentence stands fast forever. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? Blessed be God for eternal pardon!

And since I could not find a word to finish with but this one, I will use itHe has Divinely pardoned us! There is such a truth, reality and emphasis in the pardon of God as you can never find in the pardon of man. Though a man should forgive all you have done against him, if you have treated him very badly, yet it is more than you could expect that he should quite forget it, but the Lord says, Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever. If a man has played you false, although you have forgiven him, you are not likely to trust him again. It is an old proverb, Never ride a broken-kneed horse. And it is not a bad proverb, either.

But see how the Lord deals with His people. When Peter was set on his legs again, he was a broken-kneed horse enough and yet see how gloriously the Lord rode that charger on the day of Pentecost! Did He not go forth conquering and to conquer? The Lord lets bygones be bygones so completely that He trusts pardoned souls with His secrets, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He entrusts some of us with His choicest treasures, for Paul said, He has put me in trust with the Gospel, though I was a blasphemer. He commits to our keeping that priceless case which encloses the best hope of men, namely, the Gospel of Jesus! We have this treasure in earthen vessels. This shows how perfect is our forgivenessno, I must say it, how Divine is the forgiveness which we have received!

Let us rejoice in that grand promise which comes to us by the mouth of Jeremiah of old, In those days and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve. Here is annihilationthe only annihilation I know ofthe absolute annihilation of sin through the pardon which the Lord gives to His people!

Let us sing it as though it were a choice hymnThe iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none!

III. Now, if you have drunk into the spirit of our subject, you will be strengthened to hear what I have to say to you upon a point of practice. FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, even as God for Christs sake has forgiven you. Let me say at the commencement that I do not know of anyone here present who has fallen out with anybody else and, therefore, I shall make no personal allusions. If I did know of quarrels and bickering, it is very likely that I should talk about the same, but I do not happen to know of any and if, therefore, my remarks should come home, I would earnestly beg each one so affected to believe that what I say is intended for him or her and to receive it as a pointed, personal message from God.

Forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake has forgiven you. Now observe how the Apostle puts it. Does he say forgiving another? No, that is not the text. If you look at it, it is forgiving one another. One another! Ah, then that means that if you have to forgive, today, it is very likely that you will, yourself, need to be forgiven tomorrow, for it is forgiving one another. It is turn and turn about, a mutual operation, a cooperative service! In fact, it is a joint-stock business of mutual forgiveness and members of Christian Churches should take large shares in this concern. Forgiving one another. You forgive me and I forgive youand we forgive them and they forgive usand so a circle of unlimited forbearance and love goes round the world!

There is something wrong about me that needs to be forgiven by my Brother, but there is also something wrong about my Brother which needs to be forgiven by me and this is what the Apostle meansthat we are all of us, mutually, to be exercising the sacred art and mystery of forgiving one another. If we always did this, we should not endure those who have a special faculty for spying out faults. There are some who, whatever Church they are in, always bring an ill report of it. I have heard this sort of thing from manyThere is no love among Christians at all. I will tell you the character of the gentleman who makes that observationhe is both unloving and unlovely and so he is out of the track of the pilgrims of love.

Another cries, There is no sincerity in the world! That man is a hypocriteyou can be quite sure of that! Judge a bird by its song and a man by his utterance. The censorious measure our corn, but they use their own bushels. You may know very well what a man is by what he says of others. It is a gauge of character which very seldom will deceive youto judge other men by their own judgment of their fellow men. Their speech betrays their heart. Show me your tongue, Sir! Now I know whether you are sick or well. He that speaks with an ill tongue of his neighbor has an ill heart, rest assured of that. Let us begin our Christian career with the full assurance that we shall have a great deal to forgive in other people, but that there will be a great deal more to be forgiven in ourselves! And let us set our account upon having to exercise gentleness and needing its exercise from others, Forgiving one another, even as God for Christs sake has forgiven you.   
Note again. When we forgive, it is a poor and humble business compared with Gods forgiving us, because we are only forgiving one another, that is, forgiving fellow servantswhereas when God forgives us it is the Judge of all the earth forgiving, not His fellows, but His rebel subjects, guilty of treason against His majesty! For God to forgive is something greatfor us to forgive, though some think it greatshould be regarded as a very small matter. Then reflect upon the matter to be forgiven. Our Lord in His parable tells us that the fellow servant owed a few pence, but the servant, himself, owed his master a fortune. What we owe to God is infinitebut what our fellow creature owes us is a very small sum.

What did he do which has so much offended you? He said a very shameful thing about me. It was very bad of him, no doubt. Then he played me a very nasty trick and acted very ungracious! In fact, he behaved scandalously and if you hear the story you will be quite indignant. Well, I am indignant. He is a bad fellow, there is no doubt about itbut so are you! So were you certainly when you first came to Godbad as your friend is to you, you have been much worse to the Lord. I will guarantee that his blacks towards you are whites compared with your blacks in the Presence of God! Oh, but you would not believe how basely he acted. No, and I dare say I should hardly believe it if I heard how base you have been to the Lord! At any rate, it should make our eyes fill with tears to think how we have grieved our God and vexed His Spirit.

Some of us have had so much manifest forgiveness, so much outward sin forgiven that for us to forgive ought to be as natural as to open our hands! After such forgiveness as the Lord has bestowed on some of us, we would be wicked servants, indeed, if we were to take our Brother by the throat and say, Pay me what you owe. We would deserve to be given over to the tormentors by our angry Master if we did not count it joy to pass by a Brothers fault! If anyone here who is a Christian finds a difficulty in forgiveness, I am going to give him three words which will help him wonderfully. I would put them into the good mans mouth. I gave them to you just now and prayed you to get the sweetness of them. Here they are again! For Christs sake.

Cannot you forgive an offender on that ground? Ah, the girl has acted very shamefully and you, her father, have said some strong things, but I beg you to forgive her for Christs sake. Cannot you do it with that motive? It is true your son has behaved very wrongly and nothing hurts a fathers heart more than the wicked conduct of a son. You said, in a fit of anger, a very stern thing and deny him your house forever. I entreat you to eat your words for Christs sake. Sometimes when I have been pleading a case like that, the person I have been persuading has kindly said, I will do it for you, Sir. I have said, I will thank you if you will do it at all, but I would rather you have said you would do it for my Master, for what a blessed Master He has been to you! Do it for His sake.

I may be speaking very plainly home to some of you. I hope I am. If there are any of you who have got into a bad state of heart and have said you will never forgive a rebellious son, do not say so again till you have looked at the matter for Christs sake. Not for the boys sake, not for your neighbors sake who has offended you, not for any other reason do I urge you to be merciful, but for Christs sake! Come, you two brothers who

have fallen out, love each other for Christs sake! Come, you two sisters, come you two friends who have been alienatedget together directly and end all your ill feeling for Christs sake! For Christs sake you must not keep a drop of malice in your soul. Oh charming words! How they melt us and as they melt it seems to leave no trace of anger behind itfor Christs sake our love suffers long and never fails!

I do not know how to put this next word I am going to say. It is a paradox. You must forgive or you cannot be saved, but at the same time you must not do it from compulsionyou must do it freely. There is a way of carrying this into practice, though I cannot explain it in words. You must forgive, not because you are forced to, but because you heartily do it. Remember, it is of no use for you to put your money into that offering box as you go out unless you remember, first, to forgive your brother! God will not accept the gifts, prayers, or praises of an unrelenting heart! Though you leave all your substance to His cause, He will not accept a penny of it if you die in an unforgiving temper! There is no Grace where there is no willingness to overlook faults.

John says, He that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? The very prayer that teaches you to ask for mercy bids you say, forgive us, as we forgive our debtors. Unless you have forgiven others, you read your own death warrant when you repeat the Lords prayer! Finally, I want to say to you all, Brothers and Sisters, that as Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, if we are to forgive one another, there must be some other things which we ought to do. And the first is, do not let us provoke each other to offend. If I know that a man does not like a certain thing, I will not thrust it in his way.

Do not say, Well, but if he is short-tempered, I cannot help it! He should not be so ready to take offense. I cannot be always paying deference to his absurd sensitiveness! No. But, Brother, your friend is very ready to take offense and you know that he ishave respect, then, to his infirmity of temper such as you would have if he were afflicted in body. If you have rheumatism or gout, your friends do not go stamping across the room and saying, He ought not to mind that! He ought not to feel it. Kind-hearted people step across the floor with a light step, for fear they should hurt the poor suffering limb. If a man has a diseased mind and is very irritable, treat him gently, pity his infirmity and do not irritate him.

A friend wrote me, a short while ago, a letter of serious complaint against a Brother who had been very angry with him and had spoken very sharply while excited to passion. I felt bound to hear the other side of the story and I was obliged to say, Now, you two Brothers are both wrong. You, my Brother, lost your temper, but you, my other Brother, irritated him so that I do not wonder he lost his temper! And when you saw he had lost his temper, why did you not go away, or do something to quiet him? No, but you remained to increase the wrath and then wrote to expose him. I blame the wood for burning, but what shall I say of the bellows? It was wrong to blaze, but was it right to fan the flame? Very often when a man is angry he may not be the only one to blame. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, if we are to forgive each other, do not let us provoke each other to offend!

In the next place, do not make offenses. Oftentimes a man has been offended at another for no reason at all. One person has said of another as he passed him in the street, He will not even nod to me. He is too proud to acknowledge me because I am a poor man. Now, that beloved Friend who was thus blamed could not see much further than his hand, for he was nearsighted! Another has been censured for not hearing, though he was deaf! And another for not shaking hands when his arm was crippled. Do not imagine offenses where they are not intended. Next, do not take offenses where they are intended. It is a splendid thing if you will not be offended. Nothing makes a man feel so small as when you accept what he intended for an insult as if it were a compliment and thank him for it! Can you master yourself to that point?

Remember, when you have conquered yourself, you have conquered the world. You have overcome everybody when you have so fully overcome your own spirit that you remain content with that which naturally would excite your wrath. Then, if you must be offended, dear Brother, do not exaggerate an offense. Some good women, I was about to say, and men also, when they come as tale-bearers with a charge, make a great many flourishes and additions! They go a long way round and they bring innumerable beliefs, suggestions, hints and hearsays into the business until a sparrows egg becomes as huge as ever was laid by an ostrich!

I begin coolly to strip off the feathers and the paint and I say, Now, I do not see what that point had to do with it, or what that remark has in it. All I can see when I come to look at the bare fact is such-and-such and that was not much, was it? Oh, but there was more intended. Do not believe that, dear Brother, dear Sister! If there must be something wrong, let it be as little as you can. If you have a telescope, look through the large hole and minify instead of magnifying, or, better still, do not look at it at all! A blind eye is often the best eye a man can have! And a deaf ear is better, by far, than one which hears too much.

Also take no heed, says Solomon, unto all words that are spoken, lest you hear your servant curse you. Something you have done may irritate a servant and he may make remarks which are unbecoming and impertinent. Dont hear what he is muttering! Keep out of hearing. He will be sorry, tomorrow, and if he thinks you did not hear him, he will continue in your service and be faithful to you. What would you do if your employer picked you up for every word and if he caught up every sentence that you uttered? How would you live at all if he reckoned sharply with you? No, dear Friends, as you have to forgive one another, do not take offenseand when offense is given do not exaggerate itand, if you can, do not even observe it!

Then, again, do not publish offenses. There has been something very offensive said. What then? Do not repeat it! Do not go, first, to one and then to another, and say, Now this is quite private and, mind you keep it a secretSo-and-So has spoken shamefully. Better that you should let your heart break than go up and down with a firebrand in this fashion! If a Brother has done wrong, why should you do wrong? You will be doing wrong if you publish his fault. Remember how the curse came upon

Noahs son for exposing his father? And how much better it is for us all when there is anything wrong to go backward and cover it, without even looking at it, ourselves, if we can help it! Cover it up! Cover it up! Charity covers a multitude of sins. Not only one, two, three sins will charity cover, but she carries a cloak which covers a whole host of faults.

Above all, my Brothers and Sisters, and with this I close, never in any way, directly or indirectly, avenge yourselves. For any fault that is ever done to you, the Master says unto youresist not evil. In all things bend, bow, yield, submit. If you tread on a worm it will turn, says somebody. And is a worm your example? Christ shall be mine! It is a shocking thing when a Christian man forgets his Lord to find an excuse for himself among the poor creatures under his feet! But if it must be so, what does a worm do when it turns? When you have stepped on a worm, does it bite? Does the worm hurt anyone? Ah, no. It has turned, but it has turned in its agony and writhed before you, that is all. You may do that, too, if you must.

Brother, the most splendid vengeance you can ever have is to do good to them that do you evil and to speak well of them that speak ill of you. They will be ashamed to look at you. They will never hurt you again if they see that you cannot be provoked unless it is to greater love and larger kindness. This ought to be the mark of Christians! Not, I will have the law on you, or, I will avenge myself. But, I will bear and forbear even to the end. Vengeance is mine. I will repay it, says the Lord. Do not take that into your hand which God says belongs to Him, but as He, for Christs sake, has forgiven you, so also forgive all those who do you wrong. How long am I to do that? says one. I would not mind doing it three or four times. There was one of old who would go the length of six or seven, but Jesus Christ said, unto 70 times seven. That is a very considerable number. You may count whether you have yet reached that amountand if you have, you will now be glad to

begin againstill forgiving, even as God for Christs sake has forgiven you!

God help us to be patient to the end! Though I have not, just now, been preaching Christ Jesus as the Object of the sinners trust, yet remember that He must also be the Object of our imitation. This is the kind of doctrine which Christ Himself preached and, therefore, since He preached continually this love to our neighbor and forgiveness of our enemies, we ought both to preach and to practice it. Go and believe in Him and be imitators of Him, remembering that He forgave His murderers upon the Cross whereon He worked out our redemption! May His Spirit rest upon you always. Amen.

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FOR CHRISTS SAKE   
NO. 614

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For Christs sake.   
Ephesians 4:32.

THIS is the great argument of awakened sinners when they seek mercy at Gods hands. Once they could boast of their own righteousness. They could rest upon their feelings, their resolutions, their goodness of heart, or their prayersbut now that God the Holy Spirit has shown them what they are and revealed to them the desperate evil of their hearts, they dare not offer any other plea than thisFor Christs sake. They look and there is no man to succor. They cast their eyes around and there is no helper and their heart knows neither peace nor hope till they behold the Person and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Then straightway their mouth is opened with arguments and they can plead with God with prevailing reasons, saying, For Christs sake, for Christs sake, have mercy upon me.

Indeed, Beloved, this is the only argument which can prevail with God in prayer, whether the prayer comes from saint or sinner. It is true that God did not originally love us for Christs sake, for His electing love was Sovereign and absolutethe Father loved us not because the Savior diedbut the Savior died because the Father loved us from before the foundation of the world. Nevertheless the only channel of communication between a loving Father and His elect people is the meritorious and glorious Person of Christ. The Father gives us no privilege except through His Only-Begotten, nor are we looked upon as accepted or acceptable except as we stand in and through our Lord Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, perfect in Christ Jesus.

I must use no other argument when I plead with God but the name of His dear Son, for this is the sum of all heavenly logic. Whatever Covenant mercy I may wish for, this is the key which will unlock the storehouses of Heaven. No other name will prevail with God to scatter His mercies among undeserving sinners. He who knows how to plant his foot on the solid foothold of, for Christs sake, needs not fear, like Jacob, to wrestle with the Angel of God. But if we forget this in our prayers, we have lost the muscle and sinew from the arm of prayerwe have snapped the spinal column by which the manhood of prayer is sustained erectwe have pulled down about our own ears the whole temple of supplication as Samson did the house of the Philistines.

For Christs sake, this is the one unbuttressed pillar upon which all prayer must leantake this away and it comes down with a crash! Let this stand and prayer stands like Heavenreaching upwardholding communion with the skies. In two ways, as the Holy Spirit may enable us, we will read the words before us. It is Gods argument for mercyFor Christs sake. It is our reason for serviceFor Christs sake. I. GODS ARGUMENT FOR MERCY. He forgives us for Christs sake.

Here let us first look at the force of this motive. And then, secondly, let us notice some qualifications in it which may, through Gods blessing, be the means of comforting seeking sinners who desire to find rest in and through Jesus Christ.

1. Let us consider the force of this motive by which God is moved to forgive sinners, for Christs sake. You know that if we do a thing for the sake of a person, several considerations may work together to make our motive powerful. We may be willing not only to do some things, but many thingsno, all thingsfor the sake of the individual admired or beloved. The first thing which will move us to do anything for anothers sake is his person, with its various additions of position and character. The excellence of a mans person has often moved others to high enthusiasm, to the spending of their livesyes, to the endurance of cruel deaths for his sake.

In the day of battle, if the advancing column wavered for a single moment, Napoleons presence made every man a hero. When Alexander led the van there was not a man in all the Macedonian ranks who would have hesitated to lose his life in following him. For Davids sake the three mighties broke through the host, at imminent peril of their lives, to bring him water from the well of Bethlehem.

Some men have a charm about them which enthralls the souls of other men who are fascinated by them and count it their highest delight to do them honor. There have been, in different ages, leaders, both warlike and religious, who have so entirely possessed the hearts of their followers that no sacrifice was counted too great, no labor too severe. There is much to move the heart in the excellence of a person. How shall I, in a fitting manner, lead you to contemplate the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing that His charms far exceed all human attractions as the sun outshines the stars?

Yet this much I will be bold to say, that He is so glorious that even the God of Heaven may well consent to do ten thousand things for His sake! Brothers and Sisters, we believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be very God of very God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, essential Deity. Jesus is no distinct God, separate from the Father, but, in a mysterious manner, He is One with the Father, so that the old Jewish watchword still stands true. Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And yet Jesus is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness.

Besides this, He, for us men and for our salvation, took upon Himself the form and nature of manbecame Incarnate, as the virgins son and, as such, lived a life of perfection, never sinning, always full of love and holy service, both to God and man. There He standsby the eye of faith we may see HimGod over all, blessed forever. And yet Man, of the substance of His mother, He stands to plead before the eternal Throne Almighty God, all-perfect Man. He wears upon His head a crown, for he is a Prince of the house of David, and His dominion is an everlasting dominion.

Upon His bosom glitters the bejeweled breastplate, for He is a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec and over His shoulders hangs the mantle of prophecy, for He is a Prophet and more than a Prophet. Now, as He stands there, adored of angels, worshipped by cherubim and seraphim, having the keys of Heaven and earth and Hell at His sideMaster of winds and waves, Lord of Providence, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Lord of LordsI wonder not that such a Person should prevail with the Father, and that God, for His sake, should bestow innumerable blessings upon the unworthy for whom He pleads!

He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely! His head is as much fine gold! His lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh! His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars! His mouth is most sweetyes, He is altogether lovely. The whole creation can afford

*But some faint shadows of my Lord.   
Nature, to make His beauties known,   
Must mingle colors not her own.   
Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,*

*Nor Heaven, His full resemblance bears.   
His beauties we can never trace,   
Till we behold Him face to face.*

In the surpassing majesty of His Person lies a part of the force of the plea. A far greater power lies in near and dear relationship. The mother, whose son had been many years at sea, pined for him with all a mothers fondness. She was a widow and her heart had but this one object left. One day there came to the cottage door a ragged sailor. He was limping on a crutch and seeking alms. He had been asking at several houses for a widow of such-and-such a name. He had now found her out.

She was glad to see a sailor, for never since her son had gone to sea had she turned one away from her door, for her sons sake. The present visitor told her that he had served in the same ship with her beloved boy that they had been wrecked together and cast upon a barren shorethat her son had died in his arms and that he had charged him with his dying breath to take his Bible to his mother. She would know by that sign that it was her sonand to charge her to receive his comrade affectionately and kindly for her sons sake. You may well conceive how the best of the house was set before the stranger! He was but a common sailor. There was nothing in him to recommend him. His weather-beaten cheeks told of service, but it was not service rendered to herhe had no claim on her and yet there was bed and board and the widows hearth for him.

Why? Because she seemed to see in his eyes the picture of her son and that Book, the sure token of good faith, opened her heart and her house to the stranger. Relationship will frequently do far more than the mere excellence of the person. Think, Brothers and SistersJesus Christ is the Only-Begotten Son of God! Our God had but one begotten Son and that Son the darling of His bosom. Oh, how the Father loves Him! It is not possible for us to measure Divine love, for we have no measuring line. Human love at best is only finite even when it reaches its very highest. When we plunge into the depths of human love, there is yet a bottom!

But Divine love has neither shore nor boundary. Little can we tell what unity of essence means. The Divine Persons are one in Essenceone God. We cannot, therefore, conceive what affection must spring from this closest of all known unities. Oh, how Jehovah loves Him! And yet that dear

Son of His, for our sakes left the starry throne of Heaven, became a Man, sufferedbled and died! And when we come to mercys bar, bringing with us Christs own promise, the Eternal Father sees Jesus in our eyesbids us welcome to mercys table and to mercys house for the sake of Him who is His Only-Begotten Son.

Still I have only advanced to the border of my subject. The force of the words, for Christs sake, must be found deeper still, namely in the worthiness of the Person and of His acts. Many peerages have been created in this realm which descend from generation to generationwith large estatesthe gift of a generous nation and why? Because this nation has received some signal benefits from one man and has been content to ennoble his heirs forever for his sake. I do not think there was any error committed when Marlborough or Wellington were lifted to the peeragehaving saved their country in war it was right that they should be honored in peace. And when, for the sake of the parents, perpetual estates were entailed upon their descendants and honors in perpetuity conferred upon their sons, it was only acting according to the laws of gratitude.

Let us think of what Jesus Christ has done and let us understand how strong must be that pleafor Jesus sake. The Law of God was violated. Jesus Christ came into the world and kept itkept it so that out of the whole Ten Commands there is not one whose clamorous tongue can lay anything to His charge. Here was a Divine dilemmaGod must be just, yet He willed to save His people. How could these two things meet? Where was the man who could break down the mountain which separated Justice and Mercy, so that they could kiss each other? God must punish sin and yet He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious. How shall these two things agree?

Forth came the priests, with their various sacrifices. But the slaughter of bullocks and heifers and rams and he-goats, could not make God just. What comparison could there be between rivers of blood of fed beasts and the sin of man? But Jesus camethe great Solution of the Divine enigmaJesus cameeternal God, but yet perfect Man and He bowed His head to the ignominious death of the Cross! His hands were pierced! His feet were nailedHis soul was sorrowful, even unto death

*Jesus, our Lord and God,   
Bore sins tremendous load.   
Praise His name!   
Tell what His arm has done,   
What spoils from death He won!   
Sing His great name alone.   
Worthy the Lamb!*

God was justHe punished human guilt in the Person of mans representative, Jesus of Nazareth. God is graciousHe accepts every believing sinner for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Think, then, of what Christ has done and you will see the force of the argument. He has honored the Law of God which man had dishonored and has opened a way for Gods mercy which mans sin had fast closed up. Oh, God, Your Son has brought back what He took not awayHe has taken the prey from the mighty and the lawful captive He has delivered. Like another David He has snatched the sheep from the jaws of the lion and delivered the lamb from the paws of the bear. Like another Samson He has slain Your enemies and taken the gates of their strongholds upon His shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill. Every wound which He endured upon the Cross, every stroke which He felt in Pilates hall, every drop of blood which He sweat in Gethsemane strengthens the plea, for Christs sake.

Still, still I think I have not yet arrived at the force of the words. If any stipulation has been made, then the term, for His sake, become more forciblebecause they are backed by engagements, promises, covenants. In Christs case solemn promises have been exchanged. There was a distinct engagement made between the Judge of men and the Redeemer of our souls. The Prophet Isaiah has published the engagement, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.

Yet again, I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong. And still further, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. There was a distinct transaction, then, of ancient date between the Father and the Son in which the Son stipulated that He would bear the sin of His people. He was to be the Scapegoat for His people Israel. And then it was solemnly engaged on the part of the Divine Judge of all the earth that He would give Him the souls of the redeemed to be His portion forever.

Now, Brethren, there is a strength in the plea, for Christs sake. Oh God, with reverence would we speak of You, but how could You be just if You did not save those for whom Jesus shed His precious blood? Brethren, we speak as unto honest menwould you, being men, first of all accept a surety and a substitute and then expect the debtor to pay the debt himself? Look at human governmentsif a man were drafted into the army and should find a substitute, does the law afterwards seize the man himself? And shall God be less just than man? Shall the supreme king of Heaven be less just than the kings of earth? If Christ has paid my debt, Gods justice cannot demand payment of me! It cannot expect the same debt to be paid twice. Justice cannot demand payment

*First at my bleeding Suretys hands,   
And then again at mine.*

If Christ served in that dread warfare for me as my Substitute, how can it be that after this I should myself be driven to the edge of the sword? Impossible! Beloved, see that scapegoat yonder? Israels sins have been confessed upon it. The High Priest has laid his hand on the victims head. It is led away by the hand of a fit man. He sets it free. He watches itit is out of sight. He climbs a rock, looks far away to the east, the west, the north, the southhe cannot see it. He waits awhilelooks with anxious eyesit is gone! He comes back and tells the people of Israel that the sin has been typically carried away upon the scapegoats head.

Now, Christ is the fulfillment of the scapegoat. Our sins were laid on HimHe is gonegone where? You shall seek Me but you shall not find Me, He says. He is gone into the desolate regions of the dead. The Scapegoat, Christ, has carried away into His own tomb, the sins of all His people forever. Now, was that a farce, or was it a reality? Did Christ take away sin, or not? If He did, then how can men be punished for sins which

Jesus took away, for the sins for which Christ was punished? If He did not suffer for sin, then where is the deliverance for any soul born of Adam? Oh you that receive general redemption, you know not what you receive! You who talk of a universal atonement which does not make an atonement for all sin, know not what you affirm!

But we who speak of a special Atonement made for every soul that ever has believed or ever shall believewe speak of something sure, certain, worthy of the souls resting itself uponsince it does save every soul for whom it was offered up! There remains only one other thought upon this point. It tends very much to strengthen the plea, for Christs sake, if it is well known that it is the desire of the person that the gift should be granted and if, especially, that desire has been and is earnestly expressed. Oh how glad we ought to be to think that Christ, when we plead His name, never tells us that we are going too far and taking liberties! No, Beloved, if I anxiously ask for mercy, Christ has asked for mercy for me long ago!

There is never a blessing for which a Believer pleads but Christ pleads for it, too! He ever lives to make intercession for us. Our supplications become His supplications and our desires, when excited of the Spirit, are His desires. In Heaven He points to His wounds, the mementoes of His grief, and He criesFather, for My sake grant this favor to these poor undeserving ones. Give them blessing as You would give Me blessings. Be kind and gracious to them, as You would be kind and tender towards Me. This makes the plea omnipotent. It is not possible but that it should mightily prevail with God.

2. Pausing a minute let us enumerate some few other qualifications of this plea by way of comfort to trembling seekers. This motive, we may observe, is with God a standing motive. It cannot change. Suppose, poor Sinner, that God offered to forgive for your own sake. Then if at one time you were penitent and broken-hearted, there would be hope for you. But at another time you might be bemoaning the hardness of your heart and powerlessness to repent and then there would be no motive why God should bless you. But, you see, Christ is always as much worthy at one time as another and therefore God has the same reason for blessing you a poor wandering soul todayas He can have had twenty years ago!

And if you have grown grey in sinif you have become like a dry piece of wood ready for the fireyet this motive does not wear out! It has the dew of its youth upon it. God, for Christs sake, forgives little children and for the same reason He can forgive the man who has passed his threescore years and ten. As long as you are in this world, this is a standing reason for mercy. Remember, again, that this is a mighty reason. It is not merely a reason why God should forgive little sins, or else it would be a slur upon Christas though He deserved but little.

Can you tell how great your sin is? Oh, you say, it is high as Heaven, it is deep as Hell! Now can you tell how great Christs worthiness is? I will tell you that His worthiness is deeper than Hell can be and higher than Heaven itself. What? If your sin could reach from east to west and from the highest star to the depth of the abyss, yet the worthiness of Christ is a fullness which fills all in all and therefore it would cover all your sins! Your sins, like Egypts hosts, are many and mightyChrists worthiness is like the flood of the Red Seaable to drown the whole so that not one of their host shall be left. They shall sink into the bottom like a stone.

Your sins are like Noahs flood which drowned all mankind. Christs worthiness is like Noahs ark which swims above the tide and mounts higher as the flood grows deeper. The deeper your sin the more is Christs merit exalted above the heavens when Jehovah forgives you all your iniquities! Think not little of Christ! I would not have you think little of sin but still think more of Christ. Sin is finite. It is the creatures act. Christ is Infinite. He is Omnipotent. Whatever, then, your sin may be, Christ is greater than your sin and able to take it away.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, it is a most clear and satisfactoryI was about to say most reasonable reasona motive which appeals to your own common sense! Can you not already see how God can be gracious to you for Christs sake? We have heard of persons who have given money to beggars, to the poor. Not because they deserved it, but because they would commemorate some deserving friend. On a certain day in the year our Horticultural Gardens are opened free to the public. Why, why should they be opened free? What has the public done? Nothing. They receive the gift in commemoration of the good Prince Albert.

Is not that a sensible reason? Yes. Every day in the year the gates of Heaven are opened free to sinners. Why? For Jesus Christs sake! Is it not a most fitting reason? If God would glorify His Son, how could He do better than by saying, For the sake of My dear Son set the pearly gates of Heaven wide open and admit His chosen ones. See these myriads of spiritsthey are all admitted to their throne of immortal glory for the sake of My dear Son. They are happy, but they are happy for His sake. They are holy, but they are holy for His sake. Casting their crowns at His feet, they sing, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory, and blessing.

You perceive at once that this reason appeals to common sense and therefore, I hope, dear Friends, you will lay hold of it. Let me say, poor Sinner, that it is a reason applicable to your case. If you can, think of any good and solid reason why God should forgive you! Turn them all over. You cannot see one! I know the time when I could not find a half a reason why God should save me, but I could find fifty thousand reasons why He should damn me! And when I see that, for Christs sake, O that is a reason! That is a good reasonit is a reason I can get hold of! Suppose me to be the blackest sinner out of Hell. How it will glorify Christ if, for Christs sake, the blackest sinner that ever lived should be snatched from Hell and taken to Heaven for His sake!

Suppose I have been a blasphemer, unchaste, an adulterer, a murdererwhat then? For Christs sake. The more sin I have, the more glorious will the merit of Christ seem to be, when, in opposition to all my unworthiness, it brings me pardon and eternal life and takes me to the enjoyments of His right hand! Sinner, grasp this motive! I know where you have beenyou have been raking about in that filthy dunghill of your own heart. You have been turning the filth over to find a jewel in it. You will

never find one! The jewels which once belonged to mankind were all lost by our father, Adam.

I know what you have been doing! You have been trying to be better in order to deserve well of God. Thus you thought you would manufacture a reason which should move the heart of God. Leave off this foolish work come with nothing in your hands but Christ! When the Molossians were threatened by their king to be cut to pieces for their rebellion, they pleaded very hard, but no argument would touch his heart. Then, one day one of their ambassadors saw his son in the palace. Catching him up in his arms, he took and laid him down before his fathers feet and said, For your sons sake, have pity upon us.

Now, do this, Sinnertake Christ in your arms and say, For Christs sake. The whole heart of the Gospel lies here. All true theology is comprehended in this, For Christs sake. Substitutionsaving the guilty through the innocent. Substitution blessingthe unworthy through the worthy. Try this precious plea, poor Soul, and I will warrant you that, before long, you shall find peace with God if you can understand the power of this argument! I may close these reflections by observing that this is the only motive, the only motive which can ever move the heart of God!

You may cry as long as you will, reform as much as you please, pray as earnestly as you likebut the gate of Heaven will never stir to your knockings till you plead, For Jesus sake! There is the, Open Sesame, which will make the gates of the city turn on their hinges. But if you have not this watchword all your doings and almsgivings and praying and what not will be but a heap of filth piled up against Heavens gate. Remember, other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. And that, there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, save Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Use that! Plead that and you shall succeed with God!

II. FOR CHRISTS SAKE IS THE BELIEVERS GREAT MOTIVE FOR SERVICE. Two or three hints as to what kind of service may be expected of us. Then a little exhortation by way of stirring us up to do this service for Christ.

1. We begin with a few hints as to what service is expected of us. One of the first things which every Christian should feel bound to do, for Christs sake, is to avenge His death. Avenge His death? asks one. Upon whom? Upon His murderers. And who were they? Our sins! Our SINS!

*Each of our crimes became a nail,*

*And unbelief the spear.*   
The very thought of sin having put Jesus to death should make the Christian hate it with a terrible hatred. I do not wonder that the Highlanders bit their lips and marched with awful determination and dread resolve of vengeance against the rebel Sepoys when they remembered how the murdered women filled up the well of Cawnpore.

Every man must have felt, then, that he was twenty men in one for retribution. And when his arm smote, he wished to concentrate all the might of justice into each stroke of his sword. When I remember that my sins tore my Saviors body on the tree, took the crown from His head and the comfort from His heartand sent Him down into the shades of deathI vow revenge against them. O sin! Happy shall he be that takes your little ones and dashes them against a stone! Yes, doubly blessed is he who, like Samuel, shall hew the Agag of his sins in pieces before the Lord and not spare so much as one single fault, or folly, or vice, because it slew the Savior. Be holy, be pure, be justbe you separate from sinners for Christs sake!

Then, next, the Christian is expected to exalt his Masters name and to do much to honor His memory, for Christs sake. You remember that queen, who, when her husband died, thought she could never honor him too much and built a tomb so famous that though it was only named for him, it remains, to this day, the name of every splendid memorialthe mausoleum. Now let us feel that we cannot erect anything too famous for the honor of Christthat our life will be well spent in making His name famous. Let us pile up the unhewn stones of goodness, self-denial, kindness, virtue, gracelet us lay these one upon another and build up a memorial for Jesus Christ so that whoever passes by may know that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him!

Should we not, for His sake, care for the growth of His kingdom and the welfare of His subjects? Ought we not to minister to the wants of His servants and comfort the sorrows of His friends? If He has a poor brother anywhere, is it not at once an honor and a duty to aid him? As David cherished Mephibosheth, who was lame in his feet, for the sake of Jonathan, so should you and I look after every heavy-laden, faint-hearted Christian, for the sake of Jesus! Should we not be bearing one anothers burdens because Christ bore our burdens? Weeping with them that weep because Jesus wept? Helping those who ask our help because God has laid help upon One that is mighty, even our Redeemer? And above all, for Jesus sake should be a motive to fill us with intense sympathy with Him.

He has many sheep and some of them are wanderinglet us go after them, my Brothers and Sisters, for the Shepherds sake. He has pieces of money which He has lostlet us sweep the house and light our candle and seek diligently till we find them, for Jesus sake. He has brethren who are playing the prodigallet us seek to bring them backfor Christs sake. Let the soul of the poorest little street Arablet the soul of the grossest scoundrel and the most abandoned harlot be very dear to us for Jesus sakelet us care even for the obstinate and rebellious for Jesus sake.

As you look at souls imagine you see Jesus weeping over them. As you look at perishing sinners imagine you see His blood bespattered on them and you will love them, for Jesus sake. Oh, Brethren, you who are doing nothing for Christyou who come here and listen to meand sit at His Table and take the bread and wine in remembrance of Himwhat will you do when your Master comes and you have to confess that you did nothing for Him? That your love was of such a sort that you never showed ityou talked of itbut you never gave to His cause, you never worked for His name?

Away with such love as that! What do men think of ita love that never shows itself in action? Why, they say, Open rebuke is better than secret love of that kind. You had better have rebuked Christ than to have had

a sneaking, miserable, untrue, unloving love to Hima love so weak that it was never powerful enough to actuate you to a single deed of self-denial, of generosity, of heroism, or zeal! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let it not be so with us any longer, but let us seek, by Gods Grace, that for Jesus sake we may have a sympathy with Him in yearning over the souls of men and endeavoring to bring them to a knowledge of His salvation!

2. A few words, lastly, by way of exhortation on this point and I will not weary your attention by longer talk. Clear as the sound of a trumpet startling men from slumber and bewitching as the sound of martial music to the soldier when he marches to the conflict ought to be the matchless melody of this word, for Christs sake. It ought to make men perform deeds which should fit them to rank with angels. It ought to bring out of every regenerate man more than was ever forced from manhood by any other wordlet it have what charm it might. It ought to make the least among us valiant as David and David as the servant of the Lord.

Think, my Brethren, what mighty wonders other words have worked. For philosophys sake what have men not suffered? They have wasted their health over unhealthy furnacesbreathing noxious gases. They have worn out their days and their nights burning the midnight oil. They have spent their last farthing to acquire the secrets of nature! They have beggared themselves and their families to unravel mysteries which have brought no more substantial reward than the honor of learned approbation and conscious power. The martyrs of science are innumerable. If someone would write their story it would make a bright page in human history!

Think again of what men have done for discoverys sake by way of traveling. Take down the books of modern travelers and you will be astounded at their zeal, their courage and disinterestedness! They have mocked the fever, have laughed at death, have left friends and kindred and the comfort of home! They have gone to inhospitable climates among more inhospitable men, have wandered about in weariness, wet with the rain, frozen with the cold, or burnt up with the heat! They have gone hungry and thirsty, sick and wearyhave journeyed on and on to find the source of a river or a passage through a frozen strait!

When I think of such expeditions as those of Ross and Franklin, I marvel at and reverence the endurance of humanity! How these bold men have braved old Boreas in his own ice-palace and faced grim desolation in its own domain! The text, Quit you like men, gets a new emphasis when we think of these conquerors of famine and cold and peril. And shall the inquisitiveness of mankind prove a stronger motive than God-given love to Jesus? If so, shame upon us! Think, again, of what men have done for false religions sake! In years gone by the scimitar flashed from the Arabs sheath and the Arabs eyes flashed fire at the very name of Mahomet! For the one dogma, God is God and Mahomet is his Prophet, blood flowed in rivers and fields were strewn with the slain rejoicing to be slain because they dreamed that Paradise was to be found under the shadow of swords.

Think how the heathen cast themselves before the car of Juggernaut to be crushed into a hideous mass of mangled flesh and broken bones and oozing blood for their gods sake! Their filthy, horrid gods sake! How many have given themselves to die by Gungas stream? How many a woman has gone up to the funeral pile and thrown herself upon her husbands dead body, giving herself an offering to her cruel gods? I know not what men have not suffered for the horrid deities which they have chosen for themselves.

Martyrs to fanaticism and deception are not a few and shall the Truth of God find us unready and unwilling to run risks for its sake? Review, my Brethren, the heroic struggles of the Lords people and here we turn to the brightest page of the worlds annals! Think of the suffering of Gods people through the Maccabean war! How marvelous was their courage when Antiochus Epiphanes took the feeblest among the Jews to constrain them to break the law and found himself weak as water before their dauntless resolve! Aged women and feeble children overcame the tyrant. Their tongues were torn out. They were sawn asunder. They were broiled on the fire. They were pierced with knivesbut no kind of torture could subdue the indomitable spirit of Gods chosen people.

Think of the Christian heroism of the first centuries! Remember Blandina tossed upon the horns of bulls and set in a red-hot iron chair! Think of the martyrs given up to the lions in the amphitheatre amidst the reviling of the Roman mobdragged to their death at the heels of wild horses, or, like Marcus Arethusa, smeared with honey and stung to death by bees. And yet in which case did the enemy triumph? In none! They were more than conquerors through Him that loved them! And why? Because they did it all, for Christs sake, and Christs sake alone.

Think of the cruelty which stained the snows of the Switzers Alps and the grass of Piedmonts Valleys blood-red with the murdered Waldenses and Albigenses and honor the heroism of those who, in their deaths, counted not their lives dear to them for Christs sake. Walk this afternoon to your own Smithfield and stand upon the sacred spot where the martyrs leaped into their chariot of fire, leaving their ashes on the ground, for Jesus sake! In Edinburgh, stand on the well-known stones consecrated with covenanting gore where the axe and the hangman set free the spirits of men who rejoiced to suffer for Christs sake!

Remember those fugitives, for Christs sake, meeting in the glens and crags of Scotias every hill. They were daunted by nothingthey dared everythingfor Christs sake. Think, too, of what missionaries have done, for Christs sake. With no weapon but the Bible they have landed among cannibals and have subdued them to the power of the Gospel! With no hope of gain except in the reward which the Lord has reserved for every faithful one, they have gone where the most enterprising trader dared not go! They have passed through barriers impenetrable to the courage of men who sought after goldbut to be pierced by men who sought after souls.

Think of the Moravians, first and choice warriors for God. Think of them selling themselves for slaves that they might teach other slaves the liberty of the Gospelconsenting to be confined in the lazar house for lifewith the absolute certainty of rotting away piece-meal with leprosy and with diseases fouler still! Why? Only that they might save the lepers soul and have an opportunity of teaching the poor diseased one the way

by which his spirit might be made whole through Jesus the great Physician!

And what have you and I ever done? Oh, pigmies, dwarfs, sons of nobodies! Our names will never be remembered. What have we done? Preached a few times, but with how little fire? Prayed at certain seasons, but with how little passion? Talked now and then to sinners. With what half-heartedness given to the cause of Christ, but seldom given till we denied ourselves and made a real sacrifice! Believed in God at times, but oh with what unbelief mixed with our faith! Loved Christ, but with what cold, stolid hearts. For Christs sake. Do you feel the power of it? Then let it be like a rushing mighty wind to your soul to sweep out the clouds of your worldliness and clear away the mists of sin!

For Christs sake! Be this the tongue of fire that shall sit on every one of you! For Christs sake! Be this the Divine rapture, the heavenly impulse to bear you aloft from earth! The Divine spirit that shall make us bold as lions and swift as eagles in our Lords service! Fixed, fixed on God with a constancy that is not to be shaken, resolve to honor Him with a determination that is not to be turned aside and pressing on with an ardor never to be wearied.

I cannot preach as I would on such a theme as this, but I leave it with you. How much do you owe to my Lord? Has He ever done anything for you? Has He forgiven your sins? Has He covered you with a robe of righteousness? Has He set your feet upon a rock? Has He established your goings? Has He prepared Heaven for you? Has He prepared you for Heaven? Has He written your name in His Book of Life? Has He given you countless blessings? Has He a store of mercies which eyes have not seen nor ears heard?

Then do something for Christ worthy of His love. Wake up from natural sleepiness and this very day, before the sun goes down, do something in some way by which you shall prove that you feel the power of that Divine motive, for Christs sake. May God accept and bless you, dear friends, for Jesus sake. Amen.

*See from His head, His hands, His feet,   
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!   
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,   
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?   
His dying crimson, like a robe,   
Spreads over His body on the tree.   
Then am I dead to all the globe,   
And all the globe is dead to me.*

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

Adapted from **The C.H. Spurgeon Collection**, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1725 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

IMITATORS OF GOD NO. 1725

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 10, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Be you therefore followers of God, as dear children. Ephesians 5:1.

WE shall read the text as it should more properly be translatedBe you therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Upon the word, imitate, our discourse will hinge. The division into chapters is often most unfortunate and, in this case, it causes a break in a passage which, in its sense, is one and indivisible. The Apostle had said, Be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christs sake, has forgiven you. Be you therefore imitators of God, as dear children. He has forgiven you, therefore imitate Him. It is a pity to have divided the argument from the conclusion.

Here, while your minds are fresh, let me remind you that this is Hospital Sunday. And let me add that my text is an argument, and a powerful one, for helping those houses of mercy. Your Lord would have you be kind, one to another, and tenderheartedbut how can we be kind and tenderhearted if the sick poor are not cared for? When all the machinery and all the medical skill are waiting to relieve the suffering poor, it is a crying shame that beds in hospitals should be unused because of lack of funds. Yet this is sadly the case and several of those grand institutions are running into debt. We may, ourselves, have no surgical skill, or nursing art, but we can each give of our substance to aid those whose lives are consecrated to the Christ-like work of healing.

We cannot be kind and tenderhearted unless we give according to our ability to such noble institutions as our hospitals. Preachers generally put the application at the end of a discourse, but on these warm days you are apt to grow tired and, therefore, I put the application at the beginning, that you may not give faintly and scantily when the sermon is over! All sorts of religionists are contributing to the common fund and we must not be lacking. When the box comes round, be you imitators of God, as dear children, in the largeness of your liberality and the freeness of your gifts! The Apostle urges us to give and forgive. If you are imitators of God, give, for He is always giving. Give, for if He were not to give, our lives would end! Give, for He gives unto all men liberally and upbraids not, and every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Be you imitators of God, the constant, generous Giver, who spared not His own Son! Thanks be to His name for that unspeakable Gift!

Then comes that which, to most men, is a harder task, but which to a Christian man is a delightI mean to forgive. God, for Christs sake, has forgiven us. He has blotted out our transgressions like a cloud and cast our sins into the depth of the sea, plunging them into oblivion! Therefore, let us forgive most freely all who have done us wrong, so that when we bow our knees, we may say without hypocrisy, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. Let giving and forgiving be two prominent features of our lives as Christiansgiving to the needy and forgiving the guilty. Giving to such as ask of us and forgiving such as offend us. By these two things let us show that we walk in love as Christ also has loved us. He has given Himself for us and through His precious blood we are forgiven our iniquities. Let us, therefore, blend giving and forgiving into one God-like life, imitating our God. This is our Fathers Commandmentlet it be our delight!

I. With this as a preface, let us now come closely to the text, and let us CONSIDER THE PRECEPT here laid downBe you imitators of God, as dear children. I note upon this precept, first, that it calls us to practical duty. Many precepts of the Word of God are thought by men of the world to be unpractical, but even in those instances, they are in error, for the result and outcome of such precepts produce the practical holiness which all profess to desire. In this instance there can be no argument at the too spiritual, sentimental, or speculative character of the textthere can be no question as to the eminently practical character of the exhortationBe you imitators of God, as dear children, for it points to action, continued action of the best kind.

Be you imitatorsthat is, do not only meditate upon God and think that you have done enough, but go on to copy what you study. Meditation is a happy, holy, profitable engagement. It will instruct you, strengthen you, comfort you, inspire your heart and make your soul steadfast. But you may not stop at meditationyou must go on to imitation of the Character of God! Let your spiritual life not only bud and blossom in devout thought, but let it bring forth fruit in holy action. Be not satisfied with feeding the soul by meditation, but rise up from the banquet and use the strength which you have gained! Sitting at the feet of Jesus must be succeeded by following in the footsteps of Jesus!

Neither does the text say to us, Be you admirers of God. This we ought to be and shall be if we are true Christians. The pure in heart, who, alone, can truly see God, are filled with a reverent admiration of Him. With the angels, every gracious heart exclaims, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. There is none holy as the Lord (Sam. 2:2). When the best of men are compared with the Lord, their holiness is not to be mentioned. Who is like unto You, O God, glorious in holiness? But we cannot rest satisfied with rendering such admirationwe must prove that we really admire by closely imitating. The worlds proverb is that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I shall alter it and adapt it to a higher use. Imitation of God is the sincerest form of admiring Him! Neither can we believe that you know God and are at all charmed with His holiness unless you endeavor, as He shall help you, to imitate Him as dear children.

Neither does the text stop at adoration, though that is a sublime height. Adoration springs out of meditation and admiration and is a very high and noble exercise of the mind. Perhaps we rise to the highest possible service of God on earth when we are adoring Himthis is the engagement of saints and angels before His Throne and never are we nearer Heaven than when we follow the same occupation here below. Beloved, let your whole lives be adoration to God! Not only on Sundays and at certain hours, or in your assemblies, but everywhere adore, by good worksa manner of worship which is as real and acceptable as the most reverent public service! Remember, to obey is better than sacrifice holy living outshines all other solemnities.

To love is to adore! To obey is to praise! To act is to worship! If you are imitators of God as dear children, your adoration will be proved to be sincere. Worship unattended by imitation is faketrue adoration dwells not in words onlyas it comes from the heart, so it affects the entire nature and shows itself in the daily behavior. Let us spread our adoration over all the day till, from the moment when we open our eyes till we close them again at night, we shall be practically worshipping the Lord by reverencing His law, delighting in His Commandments and imitating His Character! It is clear that the precept before us is eminently practical. You who boast in being such practical men, give heed to this!

Next, this precept treats us as childrenit treats us as what we are! And if we are lowly in heart, we shall be thankful that it is worded as it is. Some men are very high and mighty. Measured by their own rod, they are great men and, therefore, they must be original and strike out a path for themselves. You are not commanded to do anything of the kindthe path is laid down for youBe you imitators. This is a similar doctrine to that which we teach the children at school. You, my boy, are not to invent a system of writingyours is a much easier task, keep to your copy, imitate every letteryes, every turn and twist of your masters hand! Scholars can only learn by imitation and we are all scholars.

It may be something to aspire to be the head of a school of painting, but the first thing for the young artist to do is to copy. He who cannot copy cannot originatedepend upon that! I have heard great outcries about young preachers imitating, but I would suggest that, in their early efforts, this is not blameworthy. What more natural than that Timothy should, at first, be much influenced by Pauls manner of speech? How could a man become an artist if he did not attach himself to some school of painting and sit under a certain master?

He may be of the French school, or the Italian school, or the Flemish school, but he must begin as a follower even if he grows up to be a leader. When he has been well trained and has done much work, he may outgrow his master and become an original, but he must begin as a careful copyist. Here you are invited to become imitatorsbut the Master is such that you will never be able to learn all that He can teach and so strike out a better path. Though you are immortal, yet throughout eternity you will never advance beyond your Model, for it is written, Be you imitators of God. Listen to me, you aspiring mindsif you must be original, the most wonderful originality in this world would be for a mans character to be a precise copy of the Character of God! In you there would be novelty, indeed, for you would be like He whose name is s called, Wonderful!

When our Lord Jesus exhibited on earth the Character of God, His life was so original that the world knew Him not! They were puzzled and amazed at the sight of One who was so like unto the Father. His life struck men as being the most singular thing they had ever seen! And if we are close copyists of God, our characters will also stand out in relief and we shall, each one, be a wonder unto many. You see it is a humbling exhortation which only men of childlike spirit are likely to regard. Wisely does the Scripture address it only to suchBe you therefore imitators of God, as dear childrenif you are not His children you cannot imitate Him and you will not even desire to do so!

Observe, next, that while it thus humbles us, this precept ennobles us, for what a grand thing it is to be imitators of God! It is an honor to be the lowliest follower of such a Leader. Time has been when men gloried in studying Homer and their lives were trained to heroism by his martial verse. Alexander carried a great warriors head about with him in a casket studded with jewels, and his military life greatly sprung out of his imitation of the warriors of Greece and Troy. Ours is a nobler ambition, by far, than that which delights in battles. We desire to imitate the God of Peace, whose name is Love. In later ages, when men began to be a less savage race and contests of thought were carried on by the more educated class of minds, thousands of men gloried in being disciples of the mighty Stagyrite, the renowned Aristotle.

He reigned supreme over the thoughts of men for centuries and students slavishly followed him till a greater arose and set free the human mind by a more true philosophy. To this day, however, our cultured men remain copyists and you can see a fashion in philosophy as well as in clothes. Some of these imitations are so childish as to be deplorable. It is no honor to imitate a poor example! But, oh, Beloved, he who seeks to imitate God has a noble enterprise before himhe shall rise as on eagles wings! We are copying infinite goodness! We seek after moral perfection. We are to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke!

But as God is infinitely more than that, so are we to rise above mere innocence into actual holiness. To refrain from evil is not enoughwe must be filled with all goodness by the Spirit of God. Is not this a mark worth aiming at? Judge you what that Grace must be which is to raise us to this height! O angels, what happier task could be laid before you? What higher ambition can you know? Gods only-begotten Son, who is this day Lord of All, wears His Fathers s image in His Glory, even as on earth He was such a copy of God that He could truly say, He that has seen Me has seen the Father. I do always, said He, the things that please Him. The perfect Son of God is as His Father in holiness. You see your calling, Brothers and Sisters, to a high place in the rank of intelligences. You are bid to ascend, by God Himself! In this respect take your seats in the highest room. Imitate, but note well that you do not select an imperfect exampleBe you imitators of God, as dear children.

While it ennobles us, this precept tests ustests us in many points. Be you imitators of God. This tests our knowledge. A man cannot imitate that which he has never seen. He who does not know God cannot possibly imitate Him. Do you know God, my Hearer? Have you turned unto Him with repentance? Have you ever spoken with Him in prayer? Have you had fellowship with Him in Christ? Can you say, I have set the Lord always before me? You cannot possibly follow a copy unless you fix your eyes upon that copy and have some intelligent knowledge of what it is. We must have a spiritual idea of God or we cannot imitate Himand, therefore, the need of the Holy Spirit! How can we know the Lord unless the Spirit reveals Him in us?

What is more, this precept tests our love. If we love God, love will impel us to imitate Him. But we shall not do so from any other force. We readily grow somewhat like that which we love. In married life, persons who have truly loved, though they may begin with great dissimilarity, will gradually be conformed to one another in the process of years. Likeness is the natural product of love and so, if we truly love God, we shall by very force of that love through His blessed Spirit grow more and more like He is. If we do not love the Lord, we shall not follow Him; but if we truly love Him, we shall say with David, My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me.

Our text does even more than thisit tests our sincerity. If a man is not really a Christian, he will take no care about his life. But in the matter of close copying, a man must be carefula watchful care is implied in the idea of imitation. You cannot copy a document without being intent to read and mark each word. If I sit down to write an article out of my own mind, I have nothing to do but to make my own tracks and there is my work, such as it is. But if I have to copy from a book, them I must necessarily look to each line, and I must read it over attentively, for otherwise I may misrepresent the writer whose language I transcribe.

In copying from Nature, how careful the artist has to be at every touch, or he will fail in his picture. If a sculptor is producing a replica of an ancient statue, he must keep his eyes open and follow every line and mark. My Friend, you cannot imitate God if you are one of that sort of Christians who are habitually in a condition between sleeping and wakingwith one eye a little open and the other closed! Such men live a slovenly life and attempt a sort of happy-go-lucky religion which may be right or which may be wrongbut its character they cannot tellfor they run with their neighbors and never examine for themselves! Such people live at random and never take a days life at night and examine it to see its faults. Thus sin grows upon them like weeds in a sluggards garden. Such persons, playing at hit or miss with holiness, are sure to come short of it! But he that is in earnest will give his prayerful thought and anxious desire to it, that he may become, in very deed, a successful imitator of God. He will also call in the aid of the Holy Spirit and thus be led into holiness.

Moreover, the precept tests us as to our spirit whether it is of the Law or of the Gospel. Be you imitators of God, as dear children not as slaves might imitate their masterunwillingly, dreading the crack of his whipbut loving, willing imitators, such as children are. You do not urge your children to imitate you! They do this even in their games. See how the boy rides his wooden horse and the girl imitates her nurse. You see the ministers little boy trying to preach like his fatherand you all remember the picture of the young girl with a Bible in front of her and an ancient pair of spectacles upon her nose, saying, Now Im Grandmamma! They copy us by force of naturethey cannot help it. Such will be the holiness of the genuine Christian! He is born from above and, therefore, he lives above! His imitation of God springs out of his relationship to God.

Holiness must be spontaneous, or it is spurious. We cannot be driven to holiness like a bullock to his plowingwe must delight in the Law of God after the inward man. Be you imitators of God, as dear children, because you do not wish for anything better than to be like your Father. You have no ambition in the world that approaches your aspiration to be holy even as God is holy, according to that Word of God, Be you perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Have you that filial spirit? Have you a burning love to holiness? Or is sin your delight and Gods service a weariness? Where your pleasure isthere is your heart. If you love evil you are not the children of God at all and cannot imitate Him nor render to Him any acceptable service whatever! The Lord make us to be imitators of Him, even as children, from a natural bent, copy their parents.

While it tests us, this precept greatly aids us. It is a fine thing for a man to know what he has to do, for then he is led in a plain path because of his enemies. What a help it is to have a clear chart and a true compass! We have only to ask What would our heavenly Father do in such a case?and our course is clear. As far as we are capable of imitating the Lord, our pathway is plain. We cannot imitate God in His power, or Omnipresence, or Omnisciencecertain of His attributes are incommunicableand of them we may say they are high and we cannot attain to them. But these are not intended in the precept! Creatures cannot imitate their Creator in His Divine attributes, but children may copy their Father in His moral attributes.

By the aid of His Divine Spirit we can copy our God in His justice, righteousness, holiness, purity, truth and faithfulness. We can be tenderhearted, kind, forbearing, merciful, forgiving. In a word, we may walk in love as Christ, also, has loved us. To know what to do is a great aid to a holy life. This puts us into the light, while the poor heathen gropes in darkness, for his false gods are monsters of vice which he may not dream of imitating. Another blessing is that it backs us up in our position, for if we do a thing because we are imitating God. If any raise an objection, it does not trouble us, much less are we confounded. We did not expect, when we commenced a holy life, that everybody would applaud us, but we reckoned that they would criticize us. And so, when their censure comes, we are supported by the consideration that those who blame the imitation find fault with the copyif, indeed, the imitation is well done. He who follows God minds not what the godless think of his way of life. A clear conscience is our portion when we have, in all things, endeavored to please God.

I will leave my first head when I have made one more observation. This precept is greatly for our usefulnessBe you imitators of God, as dear children. I do not know of anything which would make us so useful to our fellow men as this would do. What are we sent into the world for? Is it not that we may keep men in mind of God, whom they are most anxious to forget? If we are imitators of God, as dear children, they will be compelled to remember that there is a God, for they will see His Character reflected in ours. I have heard of an atheist who said he could get over every argument except the example of his godly motherhe could never answer that! A genuinely holy Christian is a beam of Gods Glory and a testimony to the Being and the goodness of God. Men cannot forget that there is a God so long as they see His servants among them, dressed in the livery of holiness.

We ought not only to be reminders for the careless, but teachers of the ignorant by our walk and conversation. When they look us up and down, and see how we live, they ought to be learning something of God. Holy men are the worlds Biblesthe world reads not the Testament, but they read our testimony. Brothers and Sisters, a close imitation of God would make our religion honorable. The ungodly might still hate it, but they could not sneer at it! No, the more candid among unbelievers, perceiving our holiness to be the result of our faith, could say nothing against it. The name of Christ would not be so evil spoken of if our lives were not so faulty. Holiness is true preaching and preaching of the most successful kind.

What a support it is to the preacher when he has a people around him who are daily witnessing for God at home and in business. If the pastor can turn to his Church and say, See, here, what the doctrines of Grace can do! See in the lives of our Church members what the Spirit of God can producethen he will have an unanswerable argument with which to silence gainsayers. Does not the Lord say, You are My witnesses? Are we not detained in this world on purpose that we may bear testimony to our Lord? How can we bear forcible witness for Him unless our lives are pure? An unclean professor is a fountain of skepticism and a hindrance to the Gospel. To be useful we must be holy! If we would bless men as God blesses them, we must live as God lives! Therefore, Be you imitators of God, as dear children.

Thus much upon the precept.   
II. Secondly, I invite you, dear Friends, as we are helped of Gods Spirit, to WEIGH THE ARGUMENT. The argument is this, Be you imitators of God, as dear children. First, as children. It is the natural tendency of children to imitate their parents, yet there are exceptions, for some children are the opposite of their fathers, perhaps displaying the vices of a remote ancestor. Absalom did not imitate David, nor was Rehoboam a repetition of Solomon. In the case of Gods children, it is a necessity that they should be like their Father, for it is a rule in spirituals that like begets its like. Those who live wickedly are the children of the Wicked Oneno proof is needed, you may take it for grantedlife is the evidence of Nature.   
Those who live godly and righteously in Christ Jesus, believing in Him, are Gods children, and though the godly sin, yet they do not love sin, nor remain without repenting of it. Holiness of life is the proof of regeneration, neither can we accept any other. By their fruits you shall know them, is a rule of universal application. Gods children must be like He. With all their faults and failings, there must be about their lives, as a whole, a likeness to God. The copy may be blurred, but it

is a copy. I say to any man here who bears the name of Christian and professes to be a child of God, either be like your Father or give up your name!   
You remember the old classic story of a soldier in Alexanders army whose name was Alexander, but when the battle was raging he trembled? Then Alexander said to him, How can you bear the name of Alexander? Drop your cowardice, or drop your name. So I say to those who are unholy, unclean, impure, unkind, ungraciousbe like God, or cease to bear the name of a child of God! What need is there that you should aggravate your sin by pretending to a character which you do not possess! Be like Christ, or be not called a Christian! Do not play the Judas unless you have a mind to be a second son of perdition. The argument, then, is that if we are children we should imitate our Father.   
But it is also said, as dear children. Read it as, children beloved. Is not this a tender but mighty argument? How greatly has God loved us in that He permits us to be His children! Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. A, behold, is placed there, as if it were a thing of wonder. Do you not wonder at it in your own case, that you should be called a child of God? Behold the love which chose you when you were dead in trespasses and sins and quickened you into the life of God! Do you not remember the textAs many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name? What love was that which revealed itself in your new birth and your adoption, giving you the nature and the status of a child of God!   
Furthermore, since you have been a child, was there ever such kindness received by a child from a father as you have received? Behold, He deals with you as with children! You could not wish for God to improve upon His dealings with you, since He acts towards you as He use to do unto those that love His name. Behold how He has borne with you in manners! How He has put up with your mistakes and your forgetting! How He has cared for you in all your cares, helped you in all your difficulties and pardoned you in all your sins! I do not know what you have to say, my Brothers and Sisters, but this I can sayI am filled with admiration at the love of God for me! I have been a child greatly beloved of his Father. His love to me is wonderful! I am a deep debtor to His Grace. Are you not the same? Then imitate your Father, for the more the love of a child to his Father, the more his admiration of his Father and the stronger his desire to be like He in all things. Let it be so with you.   
However, this word, as dear children, bears yet another meaning. Children differ. A father loves all his children, but he cannot be said, in all respects, to love them all alike, for some force him to love them beyond the rest. You have one dear son who lies nearest your heart. What a sweet child he is! You have got another boyhe is your child and you love him and do your best with himbut he is an awkward bit of stuff. He gives you little pleasure and you are not particularly anxious to have him around you all day long. The first child loves you with all his heart and strives to please you. How obedient he is! How content and happy! In all things he is a comfort in the house. Your heart binds its tendrils about your Joseph more closely than about the wayward boyyou do not make a favorite of himand so excite the jealousy of the others.   
You must admit to a nearer and dearer love than usual when you think of him. You cannot help your heart clinging to himhis behavior is such that he is the son of your right hand and he has a tender place in your soulin a word, he is one of those whom the text calls, dear children. Just so, the Lord has certain dear children. Master Trapp says, God has but a few such children. I am afraid that the quaint old commentator is correct and that few imitate the Lord as they should. Yet some of the Lords children give themselves up wholly to Him, are watchful and tenderly obedient, and walk in such closeness with Him that they deserve the title of dear children. Brothers and Sisters, aim at this! Here happiness lies! Here Heaven lies this side of Heaven! To be not only children, but dear children, is to antedate eternal bliss!   
Our Lord Jesus had disciples, but of some He said, Then are you My disciples, indeed. Be such! May the Holy Spirit make you such! Around us there are troops of third-rate Christiansoh, for more first-class Believers! We have many who appear to come into the Fathers House at mealtimes to get a bit of bread, and then they are off, again, into the world. I counsel you in one thing to be like the elder brother, to whom his father said, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. Blessed are they that dwell in Your house.   
Oh, to be of Davids mindI will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Be you imitators of God, then, in so high a sense that you become dear children, whose one thought is how to please their father, whose sorrow it is to grieve Him, whose beauty it is to be like He!   
III. In the third place, I desire, dear Friends, to SUGGEST ENCOURAGEMENTS. Did I hear one cry, Oh, Sir, this imitation of God is beyond us! How are we to be copyists of God? I will encourage you by giving hints which you can work out for yourselves. First, God has already made you His children! I speak to you that are Believersyou are Gods sons and daughters! The greater work is done! If you are to be imitators of God, as dear children, you must first be His childrenthat is already accomplished! You could not have made yourselves children of God, but He has done that for you. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It must be a much easier thing to imitate the Father than to become a child.   
You might adopt a child and call it your own, but you could not really make it your offspring, do what you might. But the Lord has begotten us, again, unto a lively hope. We are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And by this new birth we are renewed in His image! Hence the greater part of the task, the insurmountable hill of difficulty, is over and that which remains is but our reasonable service. Should not the child imitate his father? Will he not do so naturally?   
Next, remember that God has given you His Nature already. Does not Peter speak of our being partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? It remains for you to let the new nature act after its own manner. A well of living water is within you, sing you unto it, Spring up, O well. Let the holy thing that has been born in you now occupy the throne and subdue the body of this death! Pray God it may. It seems to me a small thing to let the new nature have scope and freedom compared with the giving of that nature! A clean heart and a right spirit have been bestowedlet these show themselves in clean lives and right feelings. The living and incorruptible seed will produce a harvest of good workswater it with your prayer and watchfulness. If anything hinders it, repent and do your first works.   
Next, the Lord has given you His blessed Spirit to help you. Likewise, also, the Spirit helps our infirmity. Never forget that! Things impossible with men are possible enough to the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit abiding in us, vitalizing our whole nature! The most beautiful harp you ever saw has no music in itself, but must be struck by the fingers of a musicianbut the Holy Spirit makes us into living harps, which, from themselves, pour forth a natural and spontaneous melody. Is not this marvelous? We have not to look abroad for power to be holy, for the Spirit of God abides in us and works in us, creating in us the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. Oh, to be filled with the Spirit of God! Meanwhile, it is no small help in the imitation of God to have the anointing of the Holy One and to be instructed by Him. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and, therefore, He can teach us to imitate God. He is also the Spirit of Holiness and none can better promote our holiness. Be of good cheer! With such a Helper you cannot be defeated!   
Again, remember, dear Friend, that the Lord allows you to commune with Himself. If we had to imitate a man and yet could not see him, we should find it hard work. But in this case we can draw near to God some of us can shut the closet door and be alone with God when we willwe can even walk with God all day. What better conditions could we be under for imitating our God? Nearness to God brings likeness to God. The more you see God, the more of God will be seen in you. You remember the Persian story of the scented clay? One said to it, Clay, where did you get your delicious perfume? It answered, I was nothing but a piece of common clay, but I lay long in the sweet society of a rose till I drank in its fragrance and became perfumed, myself.   
Oh, if you dwell much with God in seasons of retirement and abide with Him in all the affairs of life, you will be changed into His image! As surely as the type will make its impression upon the paper and the seal will stamp itself upon the wax, so will the Lord impress Himself upon you and stamp His image upon you if you dwell in Him! This ought, also, to inspire you with ardor to remember that you have to imitate God or you cannot go to Heaven, for this is one of the main delights of Heavento be like Christ because we shall see Him as He is. They are without fault before the Throne of God. His name shall be on their foreheadsthat is to say, the Character of God shall be most conspicuous in them. Surely that which is to be our eternal destiny should be our desire today! We should strive after holiness according to His working who works in us mightily. We must become close copyists of God that we may enjoy everlasting communion with Him. May His Spirit work us to that end.

IV. Now, by turning our subject a little, we shall close WITH CERTAIN INFERENCES. I have, up to now, spoken only to saints, but here is an inference for seekers. Be you imitators of God, as dear children. What do I infer from this? I infer that God is ready to forgive those who you offended Him! O you that have never been pardoned, listen to thisthe Lord must be ready to forgive! We are to make God our pattern, but if God were unwilling to forgive, He could not be a pattern to us! We are to be ready to pass by the offenses of others and, therefore, if God is set forth as our example, He must certainly be more ready to forgive than any of us can be!  
O you that are covered with sin, I would urge you to catch at this fact! Suppose I were to bid you imitate your earthly father in frankly and freely forgiving all who vexed him? Then you might reply, Do you know my father? If I answered, Yes, you would say, Is he really a good example of patience and forgiveness? I offended him some time ago and I have always been afraid to go to him, lest he should refuse to receive me. If I could answer, Yes, your father is an example that you may safely follow in that respect, then you would reply, I will go home to him and tell him that I desire his forgiveness and am sorry to have caused him pain.   
O poor Sinners, you do not know what a forgiving spirit the heavenly Father has! He gave His Son, Jesus, that He might be able to pass by our sins and yet be the righteous Judge of men. There have been good men in the world who have delighted to pass by offenses. Some here present have been taught of the Lord till it has become easy and pleasurable to overlook injuries and forget wrongs. But our heavenly Father is much more kindand with far more delight blots out the sinners iniquities! They said of Cramer that he was more than ready to forgive, for he always returned good for evil. It was a common saying, Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn and he will be your friend as long as you live. That was fine, but my lord of Canterbury was nothing in gentleness compared with the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!   
The holy Leighton, also, was of such a gentle spirit that one day when he went out for a walk and came back, he could not get into his own house, for it was locked up and his servant had gone away for a days fishing without leave or notice. All the good man said was, John, next time you go fishing, please to let me know, or at least leave me the key, so that I may open the door. That was all. If even men have come up to such a degree of patience, much more will you find long-suffering in God! Oh, Trembler, believe that our Father in Heaven is willing to forgive you! You backsliders, you great sinners, have right thoughts of God and come to Him at once for reconciliation! There is forgiveness with Him! He delights in mercy. The Lord is good and ready to forgive.   
Christian Friends, is there one among you who thinks God will not keep His promise to you? Now listen. God is an example to us, therefore He will surely keep His Word. He must be faithful and true, for you are bid to copy Him. If God could be false to His Word, we could not be exhorted to imitate Him and, therefore, we are sure that He is faithful and true because we are bid to imitate Him closely. You may be sure that every Word of His will stand fast, for He would have us righteous and upright in all our ways. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed towards His name.   
Another inferenceonly a hint at itis, if you are told to be imitators of God, as dear children, then you may depend upon it, the Lord is a dear Father! The dear children of God have a dear Father! We may rest assured that He will be kind and tender to us, since He would have us loving towards Himself. I know you are heavy in spirit at this time. I know you are depressed and troubled, but your Father is kind and good. Believe it if you cannot see it. If reason says that He deals somewhat harshly with you, for He chastens you, remember that this is His way with His beloved. Has He not said, As many as I love I rebuke and chasten? Those stripes are seals of love! Chastisement is a high proof of wise affection! Your heavenly Father is much better to you than you are to Him. He is dearer, kinder and more loving as a Father than you have been as a child to Him. Rejoice in your Father though you cannot rejoice in yourself!   
Lastly, when the text says, Be you imitators of God, it bids us keep on imitating Him as long as we live! Therefore I conclude that God will always be to us what He is. He will continue in His love since He makes that love the example of ours! God will persevere in bringing us home to Heaven, for He teaches us to persevere and make this a part of our likeness to Himself. The Lord will not turn His heart away from us. He will not fail nor be discouragedhaving begun to make us meet for Heaven, He will never stay His hand till that work is done! Rest upon the immutable goodness of your Father and pray for Grace to always imitate Him until you come to see His face. May His Presence be with you and may He give you rest. Amen.

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THE CHILD OF LIGHT AND THE WORKS OF DARKNESS   
NO. 2401

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 24, 1887.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works   
of darkness, but rather reprove them.   
Ephesians 5:11.

SINS, especially the grosser vices, are works of darkness. They delight in concealment. They are not fit to be seen. They flourish in the darkness of the unrenewed heart. They are most fully maintained in the ignorance of a soul that is without the knowledge of the ever-blessed God. They are also works of darkness because those who follow them have a sad life of it, after allthey are not only dark as to knowledge, but they are dark as to comfort as well! There is no true light, no real joy in sin. The wages of sin is death. And they are works of darkness, too, because they tend to further darknessthe man who pursues them goes from blackness to a deeper blacknessand in the end his portion will be darkness unbroken by a ray of hope, the blackness of darkness forever.

You know that darkness stands for the powers of evil, as light is the fit emblem of the holiness of God and of His Infinite goodness and purifying Grace. Well, now, whether we, who are the children of light, are busy or not, it is quite certain that children of darkness work! They are always workingthere is no cessation in their activity. Master Latimer used to say that the most diligent bishop in England was the devil, for whoever did not visit his diocese, the devil was always visiting his people! His plow never rusts in the furrow, his sword never rests in its scabbard. The powers of darkness cannot be blamed for their slothfulnessis there ever a moment in which they are not busy and active? Luke warmness never steals over the powers of darkness! The work of the night goes on horribly, there is no pause to it and, therefore, let us who are of the day work, too! God help us to counteract the working of the silent, hidden leaven of sin by our own struggling to produce in the world a better tone of thought and feeling and, by spreading the knowledge of Gods Grace and everything which will increase reverence to God and love to men!

The text speaks of the works of darkness and it calls them unfruitful. So they are, for sin is sterile. It produces its like and multiplies itself, but as for any fruit that is good, any fruit that can elevate and benefit men, any fruit which God can accept and which you and I ought to desire, sin is barren as the desert sand! Nothing good can come of it. Every now and then we hear it said, Well, you know, on this occasion, we must set aside the higher laws of equity, because just now it is imperatively necessary that such and such a policy should be pursued. But it is never right, either for an individual, or for a nation to do wrongand the most fruitful policy for men and for nations is to do that which will bear the Light of God! The works of the Light of God are fruitful works, rich and sweet, and fit to be gathered, pleasant to God and profitable to men! But the works of darkness are fruitless, they come to nothing, they produce no good result. They are like the apples of Sodom which may appear fair to the eyes, but he that plucks them shall find that he has nothing but ashes in his hand! O you who are performing works of darkness, know that no good fruit will come of all your work! You can have nothing that is worth having as the result of all your toil!

My text, which I have just introduced to you by these few remarks, demands our attention as a great practical lesson to Christians Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Those works of darkness which are horrible and unmentionable, you cannot have fellowship with them! They produce a very potent evil to all mankind and, of course, you will avoid them. Pass not by them and flee from them! But you must also keep clear of those works of darkness which apparently seem to be colorless and to produce no particularly evil effect. You, as a Christian, have to live a solemn, earnest, serious life. To you

*Life is real, life is earnest,*

and if there are works of darkness which do not seem to be as bad as others, but are simply frivolous, foolish and time-wasting, have no fellowship with them! These unfruitful works of darkness are to be avoided by you as much as those which are most defiling. Hear this, you Christians, and God help you to obey the command!

In coming to the consideration of our text, let us enquire, first, What is forbidden? Fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Secondly, let us ask,

What is commanded? Reprove them. And thirdly, let us consider, Why are we to act thus?

I. First, then, WHAT IS FORBIDDEN? Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. We can have fellowship with them in a great number of ways.

Notice that the text does not say, Have no fellowship with wicked men. Have no dealings with men who are not converted, for then we must necessarily go out of the world. Many of us are obliged to earn our daily bread in the midst of men whom we certainly would not choose for our companions. Many of you, I know, are forced every day to hear language which is disgusting to you and you are brought into contact with modes of procedure which sadden your gracious spirits. Our Savior does not pray that you should be taken out of the world, but that you should be preserved from the evil of it! If you are what you profess to be, you are the salt of the earth, and salt is not meant to be kept in a box, but to be well rubbed into the meat to keep it from putrefaction. We are not to shut ourselves up as select companies of men seeking only our own edification and enjoyment! It is intended that we should mingle with the ungodly so far as our duties demand. We are forced to do soit is the Lords intent that we should, so that we may act as salt among them. God grant that the salt may never lose its savor and that the unsavory world may never destroy the pungency of the piety of Gods people! With evil men, then, we must have some kind of fellowshipbut with their works we are to have no fellowship. In order to avoid this evil, let us see what is here forbiddenHave no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

And first, dear Friends, we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by personally committing the sins so described. Be not deceived; God is not mocked. After all, a man must be judged by his life. If you do that which is holy and righteous and gracious, you have fellowship with the holy and the righteous and the gracious. But if you do that which is unclean and dishonest, you have fellowship with the unclean and the dishonest. The Lord will, at the last, put us among those whom we are most likein that day when He shall separate the people gathered before Him, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goatsthe sheep will be put with the sheep and the goats with the goats. If you have lived like the wicked, you will die like the wicked and be damned like the wicked! It is only those who live the life of the righteous who can hope that they shall die the death of the righteous.

I, who preach to you with all my heart the Doctrines of the Grace of God, do, nevertheless, just as boldly remind you that the Grace of God brings forth fruit in the life and, where it is really in the heart, there will be in the life that which tokens its presence. If you and I are drunks, if we can do a dishonest action, if we are guilty of falsehood, if we are covetous, (I need not go over the list of all those evil things), then we belong to the class of men who delight in such practicesand with them we must go forever! We are having fellowship with them by doing as they do and we shall have an awful fellowship with them at the last by suffering as they shall suffer!

God make us holy, then! The very name of Jesus signifies that He will save His people from their sins and He saves them from their sins by their ceasing to commit those sins that others do. His own Word is, Be you holy, for I am holy. Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. Nothing more dishonors Him than to have a following of unclean men men who refuse to be washed and resolve not to quit their old sins! Great sinners, yesthe biggest sinners out of Hellare welcome to come to Christ in order to be cleansed from their sin and set free from it! He keeps a hospital wherein He receives the most sick of all the sick, but it is that He may heal them! And if men do not wish to be healed but count the marks of their disease to be beauty-spotsif they love their sins and hug them to their bosomsthen thus says the Lord to them, You shall die in your sins. God save all His professing people from this form of fellowship with the works of darkness!

Next, we can have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by teaching wrongdoing, either by plain words or by just inference. Any man whose teaching tends towards unholiness, who directly or indirectly, either by overt phrase or by natural inference, leads another man into sin, is particeps criminis, a partaker of the crime! If you teach your children what they ought never to learn. If you teach your fellow workmen what they had better never know and if they improve upon your lessons, and go much farther than you ever meant that they shouldif they proceed from folly to crimeyou are a partaker of their sins and you have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And, believe me, there is nothing more awful than for any minister of Christ to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by keeping back any part of the Truth of Godby withholding any of the precepts of Gods Word, or by denying the terrible and eternal consequences of sin! There is nothing more dreadful than the end of such a man must be! I think that I would sooner die and be judged of God as a murderer of mens bodies, than have to go before the Judgment Seat charged with being the murderer of their souls through having kept back helpful Truths of God, or insinuated destructive and erroneous doctrines! Yes, we can easily have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness in that way.

Further, there are some who will have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by constraining, commanding, or tempting others to sin. How much harm is often done in this respect by lack of thought! What you do by another, you do yourself. If you command another to do for you what you know to be wrongI will not say that the other is right in the compliancebut I will say that you are wrong in having given the command. Let fathers, let masters, let mistresses see to it that they never command others to do what God has not commanded them to do!

Sometimes it is not actually a command that you give, but you put the person into such a position of temptation and trial that the probabilities are that that person will do wrongand if it is soin the sight of God you will have to share the guilt of that wrong! When a master pays his servant less wages than he ought to haveif that servant commits a theft, I condemn the theft, but I cannot clear the master who put the man into a position in which he must have been sorely tempted to take something more to make up for that of which he had been defrauded! I do not excuse the theft by him who committed it, but, still, I cannot screen the one who put the other where, in all probability, he would be driven to commit a dishonest act. If I place a man in a position where it is most probable, seeing that human nature is what it is, that he will commit a sin. If I have wantonly put him there, or put him there for my own profit and gain, I shall be a partaker of the sin if he falls!

If you are a nurse girl and you take those little children and set them on the edge of the cliff, letting them go to the very brink of itand they fall over, you cannot clear yourself of blame in the matter! It may be that you told the children not to go too close to the edge, but then you put them where you might be morally certain that, as children, they would goand you are responsible for all that happens to them. So, if I set another in a place where I might be able to stand, myself, but might be pretty sure that he could not, I shall be a partaker of his sin. Well, I drink my glass of wine, says one. Yes, and apparently it does you no harm, whateveryou have never been excited by it, and you feel grateful for itbut there is another man who could not do as you have done without becoming a drunk and, by your example he is made a drunk and helped to remain so. The practice may be safe enough for you, but if it is ruinous to him, take heed lest you be a partaker of his unfruitful works of darkness!

It will require great care and some self-denial, so to act towards others that we can say when we go to bed at night, If any man has done a wrong thing, today, it is not because I have set him the example. Oh, that we might all repent of other peoples sins! Did you ever repent of them? I have had enough to do to repent of my own sins, says one. But these sins of which I am speaking are your own, as well as other peoples, if you have led others into the way of committing the sin, or have put any pressure upon them to lead them to commit the sin! You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!

Sometimes men get to be partakers of others sins by provoking them. When fathers provoke their children to anger, who has the chief blame of that sin? Surely the father has! And when, sometimes, persons purposely play upon the infirmities of others to provoke them, are they not more to blame than the offenders? I am sure that it is so. I have known some try to draw others out when they have known their propensity to go beyond the truththey have, for mirths sake, led them on and tempted them to lie! Who is the greater sinner of the two in such a case as that? I am no casuist and shall not attempt to weigh actions, but I am able to say this most assuredly, that, if you provoke another to anger, that anger is, in part, your sin! If you wantonly incite another to sin by daring him to do it, or by any other method of tempting him to do wrong, you, yourself, shall share the accusation at the Last Great Day.

Further, Friends, we can be partakers of the unfruitful works of darkness by counseling them. There are some men who will not do the wrong things, themselves, but they will give evil advice to others and so lead them into iniquity. We have known persons act the part of the cat with the monkeythey have used some other hand to draw the chestnuts from the fire. They were not themselves burned, but, then, they really did the deed by their agents. Theirs was the advice, theirs the wit, theirs the shrewd hard-headedness by which the evil was done! And though they did not appear in the transaction, yet God saw them and He will reckon with them in the Day of Account.

I feel very jealous of myself when I have to give adviceand that experience often falls to my lot. A person will plead, Well, if I do right in such a case as this, I shall remain in poverty, or I shall lose my job. If I follow out my conscientious convictions to the fullest, who is to provide for me? And, you know, the temptation is to feel, Well, now, really, we must not be too severe in our judgment upon this poor soul. Can we not agree with the evident wish of the person asking the advice, moderate the Law of God, or, in some way make a loophole, and say, Well, it will not be right, but, still, you see, under the circumstances\_\_\_.

Now, I never dare do that, because, if wrong is done and I have counseled it, I shall be a partaker in the wrong! You who are called to give advice to othersas many of you may be by reason of your age and experiencealways give straight advice. Never let any man learn policy from you. Of all things in this world, that which often commends itself to certain prudent men, but which, nevertheless, never ought to commend itself to Christians, is the idea of doing a little evil in order to obtain a great good! In fact, what we are doing is believing ourselves to be wiser than the commands of God and imagining that strict truth, honesty and integrity would, after all, not be the best thing for men, even though God has so ordained! Let us so guide others that we shall have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!

But we may have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by consenting to them and tolerating them. For instance, you live in a house where there is a great deal of evil going on and you, yourself, stay clear of it. So far so good. But you never protest against ityou have been altogether silent about it. Mum, has been the word with you and, sometimes, when they come home from a place of evil resort and they tell you about the fun they have had, you laugh with the rest! Or if you do not laugh, at any rate you have not decidedly expressed your disapproval. You do disapprove of the evil in secretyou even pray against itbut nobody knows that! The wrongdoers, especially, are not aware that it is so. In fact, they fancy that, as they treat leniently your pursuit of religion, though they think it cant, so you treat leniently their pursuit of sin though in your heart of hearts you believe that pursuit to be evil!

Our Lord commands us to clear ourselves of all toleration of sinnot with harshness, not with denunciation and in an unkind spiritbut with a mild, gentle, but still powerful, honest rebuke. We must say, especially if we are parents, or masters, or persons having much influence with others, Oh, do not this abominable thing! I cannot have any share in this evil, even by silently tolerating it. How I wish that you would give it up! I entreat you, come out of this Sodomescape for your lives! A few more loving home testimonies for God and who can tell but that the husband may be converted, and the son may be led to the Savior? But for lack of this personal witness among Christians, I am afraid that the Church of God comes to be paralyzed and much of her power and usefulness is taken from her. Do not let us tolerate or wink at sin in any instance, whatever!

Far be it from us, also, to ever have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by commending or applauding sin, or seeming to agree with it. We must let all men know that whatever they may do which has about it an ill savor, it has an ill savor to us and we cannot endure it. We must always protest against it, lest we be partakers of the sins of others. O dear Friends, I believe that the great lack of the Church just now is holiness! The great need of the Church is nonconformity! I mean nonconformity to the world! We must endeavor to bring back the strictness of the Puritan times and somewhat more. Everybody is so liberal and takes such latitude, nowadays, that in some quarters it is impossible to tell which is the Church and which is the world! I have even heard some ministers propose that there should be no Church distinct from the congregation, but that everybody would be a Church-member, without the slightest examination, or even a profession of conversion!

It is supposed that people are now so generally good that we may take them indiscriminately and that they will make a Church quite good enough for the Lord Jesus Christ! Ah, me, that is not according to Christs mind, and that is not Christs teaching! Gods call to this age, as to all that went before, is, Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Bear your protest, my Brothers and Sisters, against everything that is unrighteous and unholyeverything that is not God-like and Christ-likeand let your lives be such that men shall not need to ask to whom you belong, whether to God or to the devil, but they shall see at once that you are the people of the ever-living and blessed God!

This, then, is what is forbiddenHave no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.   
II. The time flies so fast that I can only very briefly answer the second question, WHAT IS COMMANDED? Reprove them. Our lifes business in the world comprehends this among our other Christian dutiesthe reproving of the unfruitful works of darkness.   
First, we are to rebuke sin. I find that the word which is here rendered, reprove, is that which is used concerning the Holy SpiritWhen He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. We are, therefore, so to live as to let the Light of God in upon mens consciences that we may rebuke them for their sin!   
But we are also to try to let the sinners, themselves, see the sinfulness of their sin, to let the Light in upon the sin and, by Gods Grace, so to reprove them as to convict them of sinto make them feel, from the testimony of Gods people, that sin is an evil and a bitter thingand that their course of conduct is that evil thing. The Light of God has come into the world on purpose that the darkness may know that it is darkness and that Gods Light may overcome and disperse it. We are not to quench our Light and mingle with others who are in the dark, but to unveil our lamps and let the Light that is in them so shine that the darkness shall thereby be reproved! I do not say, Brothers and Sisters, that we are to go through the world wearing surly faces, looking grim as death, perpetually promulgating the Law of God and saying, You shall not do this and you shall not do that. But, cheerful as we must be with the Love of God in our hearts, we shall prove to men that the freest and the happiest life is a life of holiness, a life of consecration to God and that, together with the faithful testimony of our lips, shall be a reproving of the sin that is in the world. The very existence of a true Believer is the reproof of unbelief! The existence of an honest man is the reproof of knavery! The existence of a godly man is the best reproof of ungodliness! But when that existence is backed up by verbal testimony and by a consistent example, then the command in the text is fulfilled, for we are reproving the unfruitful works of darkness.   
III. Thirdly, let us ask, WHY ARE WE TO ACT THUS? Why are we sent into the world, dear Friends, to reprove sin and not to follow in its track? The reasons are given in this very chapter.   
First, because we are Gods dear children and, therefore, we must be imitators of Him. You, a child of God, and having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness? You, a child of God, imitating the lost and fallen world? You, a child of God, submitting to the influences of the devil and his filthy crew? Far be it from you! Ask your Father to make you holy as He is holy. To that end were you born and sent into the worldentreat your Father to help you to fulfill the very purpose of your being!   
Next, remember that we who are Believers have an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Well, then, shall we have fellowship with those who have no inheritance in this Kingdom? Remember what we read just nowFor this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. And will you, who have a part in this inheritance, make common lot with such people? Oh, be it far from you! Heir of Glory, will you be a companion of the heirs of wrath? Joint-heir with Christ, will you sit on the drunks bench, or sing an unclean song with the profane? Are their places of amusement fit for you to frequent? Are their dens of iniquity haunts for you? Up and away from the dwellings of these wicked men and women lest you are destroyed in their destruction!   
A little further down in the chapter, in the seventh and eighth verses, we readBe not you, therefore, partakers with them. For you were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord. What? Has a marvelous conversion happened to you? Have you been turned from darkness to light? Are you really new creatures in Christ Jesus, or is it all a lie? For if, indeed, you have been twice-born, if you have had a resurrection from among the dead, if a second creation has been worked in you, how can you go and live with these dead men and mingle with these who know not the life of God? Unless your profession is nothing but a farce or a fraud, Grace will so constrain you that you must come out and refuse to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness!   
The text describes these works as being unfruitful and you read, in the ninth verse, The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Now, if you are to bear the fruits of the Spirit, what fellowship can you have with the unfruitful works of darkness? The two things are opposed to one another! You fruit-bearing trees, are you going to join in affinity with these cumber-grounds that soon must be cut down and cast into the fire? What? Will you interlace your vine branches with these fig trees that have leaves upon them, but no fruit, and upon which no fruit will ever grow, for they are under the curse of God? No, it must not be so! People of God, serve Him and come away from those who render Him no service, but who rather seek to pull down His holy Temple, and to destroy His name and influence from among the sons of men!

The Apostle gives us one more reason why we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darknessfor it is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. What? Shall we have fellowship with things of which we are ashamed, even, to speak? Yet I have to say it and to say it to my own sorrow and horrorI have known professors to have fellowship with things that I dare not even think of now! They have been found out at lastsome of them were never found out till after they were dead. What a life to leadto sit with Gods people at the Communion Table! To talk, even, to others about the way of salvation, yet all the while living in the practice of secret sin! Why, surely, it were better to get into prison at once than to be always afraid of being caught! To go up and down the world making a profession of religion and yet to be acting a lie all the while, and living in constant fear of being found out! Whatever sin we may fall into, God save us from hypocrisy and make us honest and straightforward in all things! Shall we, then, go and have fellowship with things of which we should be ashamed, even, to speak? God forbid!   
I am afraid that I am speaking many Truths of God that you will regard as having nothing in them that is comfortable to you, but, Brothers and Sisters, can I help it? Can it be avoided? If we are to make full proof of our ministry and preach all the Truth to you, must we not take every passage of Gods Word, whether it is of rebuke or of comfort, in its due season? To myself, the effect of thinking over this subject is thisI have cried, Lord, have mercy upon me. I have fled, again, to the Cross of Christ. I have sought anew for an anointing of the Holy Spirit that I might not, in anything, have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And if my discourse has that effect upon you, it will do you great service! Oh, ask the Lord to make our outward lives more thoroughly pure and true! Give me a little Church of really gracious, devoted, upright, godly men, and I will be glad to minister to them and I shall expect God to bless them!   
But give me a large Church consisting of thousands, if there are in it many whose lives, if they were known, would disgust a man of God, and whose lives, being known to the Spirit of God, are a grief to Him, why, then the blessing must be withheld! We may preach our hearts out and wear ourselves to death in all kinds of holy service, but, with an Achan in the camp, Israel cannot win the victory! I beseech you, therefore, search and look! One pair of eyes, two pairs of eyes in the pastorate, and the eyes of the elders and deacons of the Church can never suffice to watch over such a company as this is! The Lord watch over you, and may you have a mutual oversight of one another! And, above all, may each one exercise daily watchfulness over his own heart and life! Thus, beloved Brothers and Sisters Christ, I leave the text with you, praying God to bless itHave no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.   
Now, if any here are living in fellowship with those unfruitful works of darkness, I pray them to escape for their lives from them! May they fly to Christ, who alone can save them! And when they have once found healing through His wounds and life through His death, then let them pray to be kept from all sin that they may lead a holy and gracious life to the glory of Him who has washed them in His own most precious blood! The Lord send a blessing, for His dear Sons sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**EPHESIANS 5.**   
Verse 1. Be you, therefore, followers of God. Or, imitators of God

1. As dear children. Children are naturally imitators. They are usually inclined to imitate their father. This is, therefore, a most comely and appropriate precept

**Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as dear children.** 2. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. What a path to walk in! Walk in love. What a well-paved way it is! As Christ also has loved us. What a blessed Person for us to follow in that divinely royal road! It would have been hard for us to tread this way of love if it had not been that His blessed feet marked out the trail for us. We are to love as Christ has loved us and the question which will often solve difficulties is this, What would Jesus Christ do in my case? What He would have done, that we may doWalk in love, as Christ also has loved us. And if we want to know how far that love may be carried, we need not be afraid of going too far in self-denial. We may even make a sacrifice of ourselves for love of God and men, for here is our modelAs Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us, an offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

3. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becomes saints. So far from ever falling under the power of these evils, do not even name themcount them sins unmentionable to holy ears! In what a position do we find, covetousness, placedside by side with, fornication and all uncleanness! In the Epistle to the Colossians, covetousness is called, idolatry, as if the Holy Spirit thought so ill of this sin that He could never put it in worse company than it deserved to be in! Yet I fear it is a very common sin even among some who call themselves saints. God deliver us altogether from its sway and help us to hate the very name of it!

4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather, giving of thanks. All sorts of evil, frivolous, fruitless talk should be condemned by the Christian. He should feel that he lives at a nobler rate, he lives to purposehe lives to bear fruitand that which has no fruit about it and out of which no good can come is not for him. But rather, giving of thanks. Oh, for more of this giving of thanks! It should perfume the labors of the day! It should sweeten the rest of the night, this giving of thanks! We are always receiving blessingslet us never cease to give God thanks for them. If we never leave off thanking until we are beyond the need of blessing, we shall go on praising the Lord as long as we live, here, and continue to do so throughout eternity!

5. For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. What a sweeping sentence! This is, indeed, a sword with two edges! Many will flinch before it and yet, though they flinch, they will not escape, for Paul speaks neither more nor less than the Truth when he declares that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

6. Let no man deceive you with vain words for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. These are the very things God hates! If, therefore, they are in you, God cannot look upon you with the love that He feels towards His children. These things He cannot endure and, because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7, 8. Be not you, therefore, partakers with them. For you were sometimes darkness. Then, these things suited you.   
8. But now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light. Get clean away from these dark things! Travel no more in the thick gloom of these abominations! God help you to walk in the Light as He is in the Light!   
9, 10. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. We ought to pray that our whole life may be acceptable unto the Lord. We are, ourselves, accepted in the Beloved. And, that being the case, it should be our great desire that every thought and word and deed, yes, every breath of our life should be acceptable unto the Lord.   
11, 12. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. It was so with the old heathen world in which Paul livedhe could not write or speak of those abominable vices which defiled the age. But is London any better than Ephesus? Surely, old Corinth, which became a sink of sin, was not a worse Sodom than this great modern Babylon! There is great cause to say of the wicked, even to this day, It is a shame, even, to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.   
13. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light. Then drag them to the Light of God! There will be a great howling when these dogs of darkness have the Light let in upon them, but it has to be done.   
13-15. For whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says, Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. See, then, that you walk circumspectly. Not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live, but looking all around you, walk circumspectly, watching lest, even in seeking one good thing, you spoil another. Never present to God one duty stained with the blood of another duty! See then that you walk circumspectly.   
15, 16. Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. Buying up the hoursthey are of such value that you cannot pay too high a price for them!   
16-18. Because the days are evil. Therefore be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. If you want excitement, seek this highest, holiest, happiest form of exhilarationthe Divine exhilaration which only the Holy Spirit can give youBe filled with the Spirit.   
19. Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. We would have thought that Paul would have said, singing and making melody with your voices to the Lord, but the Apostle, guided by the Holy Spirit, overlooks the sound, which is the mere body of the praise, and looks to the heart, which is the living soul of the praiseMaking melody in your heart to the Lord, for the Lord cares not merely for sounds, though they are the sweetest that ever came from the lips of man or angelHe looks at the heart. God is a Spirit and He looks spiritually at our spiritual praisestherefore let us make melody in our heart to the Lord.

20, 21. Giving thanks, always, for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves, one to another, in the fear of God. That principle of maintaining your rights, standing up for your dignity and so on, is not according to the mind of the Spirit! It is His will that you should, rather, yield your rights and, for the sake of peace, and the profit of your Brothers and Sisters, give up what you might naturally claim as properly belonging to youSubmitting yourselves, one to another, in the fear of God.   
22-30. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christs is the Head of the Church and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord, the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. What a wonderful expression! To think that we, poor creatures that we are, should be thus joined to Christ by a marriage union, no, by a vital unionis, indeed, amazing! Oh, the depths of the love of Christ, that such an expression as this should be possible!   
31, 32. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. There is the mystery, that He should leave His Father, and quit the home above, and become one flesh with His elect, going with them and for their sakes, through poverty, pain, shame and death! This is a marvel and a mystery, indeed!   
33. Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Thus the Spirit of God follows us to our homes and teaches us how to live to the Glory of God! May He help us to do so, for Christs sake! Amen.

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THE CHURCH AWAKENED

NO. 716

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Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep,   
Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light. Ephesians 5:14.

WE have not time this evening to enter into the question as to where this quotation came from. There does not appear to be one exactly like it in the compass of the Old Testamentbut we must remember that the Apostle very frequently quotes the spirit of texts rather than the words of them. In the eighth and in the tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews we find him quoting the same passage, but not in the same words, showing us that he, as an inspired man, felt himself able to deal rather with the spirit of a passage than with the precise words of it. There may, therefore, be no such passage in the Old Testament verbally, but as there are several which have the spirit of the exhortation, Paul was justified in saying, God has said so-and-so.

Besides, the passage may not be a quotation at all. The Apostle may mean to say that Christ said that to him, or that Christ said that by him that Christ intended, even then, while he was handling the pen and writing, to say the words which he then wroteHe said so-and-so. We have no time, however, to go into that matter. It is a more important question, perhapsTo whom is this text addressed? Nine times out of ten when it is preached, it is taken as though it were addressed to the ungodly. It is a very proper text to address to the ungodly, but I do not see that the connection permits it.

There are some who would think it altogether unscriptural and unsound to address these words to those who have no spiritual life. We are not of their number. If we see a man ever so deadly asleep we believe we are commissioned by God to preach the Gospel to him, and to say, Awake, you who sleeps, and though more and more persuaded of the need of moral sensibility in man and the desperate character of his depravity, we are not among those who fear to preach to dead sinners, but dare to say, even to the dead, Thus says the Lord, You dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord, You dry bones, live! We can, therefore, very well take this text and address it to the ungodly.

But this is not intended to be a sermon to the unconverted. It appears to me to have been addressed to the Church of God at Ephesusto have been the language of Paul to Gods own peoplewarning them not to fall into the same habits as did the children of darkness, but to come out and show themselves to be Gods people. I know the objection will be raised that they are told to come forth from the dead. But I do not see that that is any obstacle at all, for albeit that the people of God may not be spiritually dead in the sense in which the ungodly are, yet how often do we speak of ourselves as feeling as if we were dead? How often do we speak of our graces and of our piety as though they were come into a cold and dead state?

It is comparative death that the Apostle here means. We may use the words employed here as we would use them in common conversation and say that though there are some quivers of spiritual life in the breast of every Believer, yet there are multitudes who are outwardly dead as to their usefulness! And there are Christians and Churches, too, of whom we may say, without at all libeling them, You are dead, awake you that sleep. Whatever objection there may be to addressing the text to the converted, there will be far more difficulty in addressing it to the unconverted, and I think there ought to be no hesitation in directing it to either.

To raise difficulties is very easy, but meekly to try to learn what the Savior would say is far better. I intend tonight, then, to use the text to you Christians, you Church members, you professors. The first thing we shall discuss is the state of mind into which many Christians get. Secondly, what Christ has to say to them about this state, namely, Awake, and arise from the dead. And then, thirdly, the gracious promise with which we are encouraged to make the effort. Christ shall give you light.

I. First, then, let us notice THE STATE OF MIND INTO WHICH A CHRISTIAN MAY SOMETIMES GET. The state of mind into which a genuine Christian may fall, and, if a genuine Christian, much more a spurious onehe may be asleep, and, in a modified sense, even dead. Let me begin describing this state of mind by mentioning the insidious character of it. A Christian may be asleep and not know it! Indeed, if he did know it he would not be asleep! It is a part of sleep for men to be in an unconscious state, and when a Christian begins to slumber, perhaps he dreams that he is rich and increased in goods. But he is not at all likely to take up a lamentation to himself, and say, I am asleep, for if a man could say, I am asleep, I think it would he pretty tolerable evidence that he was awakeand the fear of being asleep, the very dread of being asleep would be proof, at any rate, of some degree of wakefulness.

Often, very often, when young people come to me and say, Oh, Sir, I am afraid I am a hypocrite, my answer generally is, Then I am not afraid of it, for when you are afraid of such a sin as that it is not at all likely that you are guilty of it. Some of you, then, tonight, may be in a very sleepy state, and for this very reason you will not think so. And, Brethren, a man who is asleep may be kept in very good countenance by his neighbors. His fellow Christians may not be likely to accuse him of it, for probably they are in the same state. If you put number of sleeping people together they are not likely to be very active in rebuking one anotherso that this state of mind is very dangerous and very insidious.

A man may be in a Church where nearly all the members are asleep and they may say that the other Churches in the neighborhood are fanatical, enthusiastic, and a great deal too earnest. And thus all these people are sleeping to the same tune, and comforting one another in it. Oh, then, may God help them, for they are in a very perilous state! A person, too, who is asleep, may have taken care, before he went to sleep, to prevent anybody coming in to wake him. There is a way of bolting the door of your heart against anybody. If you get into certain views of doctrine you can very easily go to sleep and your doctrines will stand as sentinels at the doors to prevent anybody from awakening you.

Beware of Antinomianism! If you once drink a draught of that it will send you into such a sleep as you may never awaken! If you fall into certain hyper-Calvinistic views you will have a reply ready to the rebuke of the most earnest of Gods servants. You will begin to judge them instead of judging yourselves, and accuse them of being unorthodox while you believe yourselves to be soundand so you arebut only in the sense of being sound asleep. This sleepiness in the Christian is exceedingly dangerous, too, because he can do a great deal while he is asleep that will make him look as if he were quite awake.

For instance, some people talk in their sleep, and many professors will talk just as if they were the most active, the most earnest, the most gracious, the most warm-hearted people anywhere! I say to you what I mean when I declare that I have heard people in this very house pray in their sleep. I do not mean in their

natural sleep, but in their spiritual sleep. I could tell by the droning way in which they prayed, and by their repeating some phrases that I had heard them use before that they were not awake to the dutythat they were not really praying, throwing their souls into itbut praying because they were asked to do so, and so just went through the motions, their souls being asleep all the time.

And many a man has sung a hymn in this house asleep, too. His heart has never been awakened to the true melody of praise, yet he has got through the hymn somehow, his lips making a sound, but his heart never singing at all. He himself is awake enough to catch the notes, but his heart not awake enough to drink into the true spirit of thanksgiving. So, you see, it is hard for a man to know he is in this state, since he can talk when asleep even as others do! What is more amazing, some people can walk in their sleep! Yes, and walk in dangerous places where waking men would be unsafe. They, by some strange influence, seem to walk steadily and calmly along the eddies and turn by the dangers beneath. Even the howling of winds abroad seems to be inoperative upon their senses, and they, therefore, have a kind of security which more wakefulness would remove from them.

And, oh, the fatal security of some professors, and the way in which they will dally with the world and yet keep up an outwardly consistent character! Oh, the manner in which some Christians will go as near to the fire of sin as well may be, and be scorched by it and yet not burned! Oh, some of you are good, excellent, moral people in the judgment of men, but nevertheless, as Christians you do not seem to be awake to the interest of Christs kingdom! And as a man can thus talk in his sleep, and walk in his sleep, there is another thing he can do better than other people, namely, dream in his sleep! He is the man to concoct plans and discover new inventions. He can sketch out methods for building chapels, oh, so rapidly! He can find ways of bringing out ministers, and doing all sorts of things, and yet he is asleep all the while!

The waking man does it, and proves that he is awake by doing itbut the slumbering man only calculatesso many pence a week, so many subscriptions, and the thing will be done! But there is never a brick to show for all his dreams! He dreams deliciously, but as for activity, it is not there. He could always manage a Sunday school, or build a Christian interest better than anybody elsebut no Sunday school or Christian interest ever springs up under his hand because the mans whole activity shows itself in inventions which are never executed, and in plans which are never carried out.

I say, then, that it becomes very dangerous, because sometimes these dreaming people do dream good things, and they get carried out by some practical person, while they, themselves, are asleep all the while. As we have often seen a sleeping drayman with his horses going on with their load, so they can make others work while they themselves sleep! And the worst of it is that when these sleeping people get into a nice comfortable position in the Christian Church they can fill it very welland they are the last people in the world to get outbecause, sleepy as they are, they know when the bed is soft and warm. And oh, when sleeping ministers get into the pulpit, what a curse they are to us! And when sleepy church officers once get into their places there is no moving them! There they are and they seem to fill the place quite wellwhile all the while it is as though the sentinels box were filled with a slumbering manand consequently the army is not guarded, and an attack may be made all of a sudden.

Oh, Sirs, I fear that half of Christian people nowadays are in this sleepy state, and yet if they were told so to their face they would be very angry with the men who had the honesty to tell the truth! Perhaps some here are not awake, and if so they will be the ones offended. And I shall, therefore, be like Swift, who said, No doubt this is a capital sermon in Church to those who are awake. But it is of no use to those who have been asleep while I have been preaching it. It is just that. The Brother to whom this applies most will be just the person to fold his arms and say, We are well, and let us leave well enough alone. It is insidious in the last degree! I have thus endeavored to show the deceptive character of this evil.

But, in the next place, what is the evil, itself? I do not know that I can describe it. But perhaps you have felt it, and certainly you must have seen it. It is an unconsciousness of ones own slate, and a carelessness of such a kind as not to want to be conscious of it. The man takes everything for granted in religion. Whether he is a Christian or not does not awaken in him any questions. He believes he is, thinks he is, and that is enough for him! He does not want to come to close dealings. He does not like the preacher who makes him try the foundations. He would rather not have such unpleasant points put to him. He says, like the man who sleeps on the mast, A little more rest, and I will awake. I fear that many of us get into such a state as this.

Then he also becomes indifferent to the state of other men. The man who is asleep does not care what becomes of his neighborshow can he while he is asleep? And oh, some of you Christians do not care whether souls are saved or damned! It little concerns some Christians what becomes of St. Giles, or Bethnal Green, or Golden Lane. It is enough for them if they are comfortable! If they can attend a respectable place of worship and go with others to Heaven, they are indifferent about everything else. And whether there shall be an increase of darkness or of light in England does not seem to concern some Christians, nor even some ministers!

I know some very good and eminent professors in their way, who seem to me, at least in my poor judgment, as if it did not matter to them whether half of England went to Hell, or whether all went to Heaven. No doubt they would be very pleased if the thing did happen that many were saved, but as to waking themselves up to the value of souls, and to engage in earnest effort and humble prayer, they are too much asleep for that and are insensible to the state of others. And they seem, too, to be perfectly immoveable by all appeals. The best argument is lost on a sleeping man! You might convince him if he were awake, but what can you do with him while he still slumbers?

Therefore it is that many a Christian enterprise has no assistance from professed Believers because, and only because they are asleep. They might help itthey ought to help itbut they do not! They profess to be the servants of Jesus Christ, but they do not serve Him because they are indifferent, and because they are much given to slumber. And then this slumbering spirit spreads itself over everything else. The sleeping Christian does not enjoy the Word. If he reads it, the text seems meaningless. If he hears it, he thinks the preacher does not preach as he used to do. If he goes to sing with others, he throws no heart into it. If he joins in the Prayer Meeting he goes in and out, but he does not wrestle with the Angel of Mercy.

As to his own closet, it is full of cobwebs! As to his own heart, he has not had an inspection of it for many a day because the man is got into a slumbering state. You can often detect Churches slumbering by the way in which they drawl out hymns, and their protracted prayers, which, after all, are no prayers at all! There is a heartlessness in the manner in which everything is done. Then these Brethren get unhappy, and afterwards they get to be quarrelsome. Do not let that be the case with any of us here!

Then there are some who get their Christianity into such a state that they are so nearly dead that they are always looking after evidences. We get into a low and miserable state because we are in a sleepy state. Where this continues long, a Christian Church comes to be a positive nuisance. These are strong words to use of any Church, but it is so. I know villages where it would be easy to establish a Baptist church if it were not unhappily the case that there is one already there which does no good and which prevents anybody else from doing anything! A pulpit may sometimes be the emblem of a curse! It may stand there. The Chapel may stand there and earnest ministers in the neighborhood may say, We cannot go there because good Brother So-and-So is there, and good Brother So-and-So may simply be a naughty one who occupies the place without bringing any return to his Master.

You ask me how I can describe this state so well. I answer, because I have been in it myself, and have to mourn that I cannot thoroughly wake myself up even now! And oh, I am quite sure there are some of you who might well join with me in that mourning. Brethren, let us think of that word, ETERNITY, and how is it that we do not feel its power more? Think of the Judgmentthink of the terrors of that tremendous day when Christ shall appear upon the Great White Throne! Remember the wrath of God! Remember the pit, which He has dug. Think of the Glory of Christof the robes of whiteness, and the tearless eyes of the blood-washed! Can we think of these things, and yet be cold, callous, and indifferent? Shall we always be at this poor dying rate? May God grant that these weighty themes may have such an effect upon us as they must have if we are awake and no longer seem to be indifferent matters because we ourselves are so nearly asleep, so nearly dead!

Now, two or three words upon what makes this evil of Christians being asleep a great deal worse. It is thisthey are Christs servants and they ought not to be asleep! If a servant is set to do a certain duty, you do not continue him in your service if he drops off asleep. Remember the virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom? It was not wrong for them to be asleep at midnight. It was the proper time for sleep. But it

was wrong for them to sleep seeing that the bridegroom was come, and that they had gone out to meet him. It was wrong for them to sleep!

As I thought this matter over I thought that you and I, and every Christian who is asleepwe are very much like the Apostles at the gate of Gethsemane. There was their Master sweating great drops of blood in awful agonizing prayer, and where were they? Helping Him? Casting their prayers into the treasury? Oh, no, not they! Watching against His adversaries and guarding Him against surprise? No, not they! There is the bold Peter who said he never would forsake his Master, but his head is on his bosom. There is John, who has sincere affection for his Lord, but his eyes are fast closed! And James, also, is fast locked in the arms of Sleep.

It is very much the same with us. Christ is up yonder interceding and we are down here sleeping, the most of us! Christ is up there showing His wounds and pleading before the Fathers Throne that He would visit the sons of men, and give Him to see of the travail of His soul! And here are we, not watching against His enemies nor helping Him by our prayers! No, we are busy here and there wasting precious time, while immortal souls are being lost! We are sleeping like men in the midst of harvest when the grain is waiting for the sickle! Our sickles are laid low and we stretch ourselves beneath the shadow of some spreading tree and sleep!

Though black clouds are gathering, and the rain which will spoil the corn is certainly coming on, we, hired to do the days work, still sleep on! It is not so with you all, but it is so with many of us. It is so bad for us to be asleep, too, because it is quite certain that the enemy is awake. You remember old Hugh Latimers sermon in which he says that the devil is the busiest bishop in the kingdom? Other bishops, he said, may not visit their dioceses, but he does. He is always at it, day and night. There is no waste of time with Satan! If we could send the devil to sleep we might take a nap ourselves, but we never can, and therefore we ought to be awake.

Christian, while you are sleeping, remember time is running out! If you could stop the hands of time you might afford yourselves a little leisure. If you could, as we say, take Time by the forelock, you might pause awhile. But you must not rest, for the tremendous wheels of the chariot of Time are driven at such a fearful rate that the axles are red-hot with speed, and there is no pause in that tremendous rush! On, on, on it goes, and a century has fled like a watch in the night! Time stops nothow can you loiter, Christians? And, meanwhile, souls are being lost!

Have you ever seen some of those marvelous pictures which illustrate Dantes Inferno? You may have seen one picture in which the artist represents souls as being driven about by wandering winds. I would change the picture and represent souls going along as in a mighty river millions of them passing by the banks of Time every hourmany of them snatched out of the current by angelic hands and landed safely upon the shore. But oh, how many of them go onward to an awful waterfall? A waterfall of souls plunging over into eternal woe! As men stand to listen to the roar of Niagara and to see the flowing foam generated, so I would ask you to look at the waterfall of Death, and to see the multitudes of souls passing down it! A million a month in China alone, and how many millions in other parts of the world are passing into eternity, unforgiven, unwashed in the Saviors blood?

Oh, Brothers and Sisters! And yet we sit down and sleep! God forgive us! God forgive us! I think that the very devil, if he were saved, would not sleep. If the fiends of Hell could be washed in blood and made new creatures, I think their restless activity which makes them go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour would turn into another channel, and they would go about to win souls! Are we to go like snails in the course of good, while swifter than the roe or the hart men fly in the road of evil? Shall it always be so?

The Christian pastor may forget the villager, but the parish priest will not! The Christian minister may not proclaim the Gospel, but from the oratory of the monks there will be no uncertain sound! Christian women may forget to visit the sick, but the so-called sisters of mercy will be there! You may turn aside, Christian, if you please, from your position in the ranks of Christ, but you will not find the servants of Satan so unfaithful! Oh that such restlessness might come upon us that we might have an insatiable hungering to do good, and an awful passion to bless our fellow men! Oh that we might yearn and sigh because others will not repent and turn to God! May the Lord send us such an awakening! If not, our sin of sleeping is terrible, indeed.

Now, what is it that causes us to sleep? I have heard some say that it is having too much business. I do not believe it! I do not find that you London Christians, as a body, are more asleep than country Christians. In fact, if I had my choice I might select my country Brothers and Sisters for a great many virtues, but certainly not for the virtue of being wide awake! Alas, in many of our country Churches nothing can be conducted in a more slumbering manner. I think that of the two I would rather have you business men with your pulses quickened by having so much to do than I would have you go into the obscurity of the country where there is so little to stir the blood. I believe those who have the most worldly business can often serve God better than those who have but little.

But still, we must never throw our sins upon the Providence of God! What is it, then? I will tell you. First, we are inclined to slumber from the evil of our nature. This invests our sin with a double guilt. Master, deliver us from the guilt and then from the power of sin! All the while we are thus asleep about Divine things, we are wide awake like the rest of the world about other things. I have sometimes remarked the way in which men will speak out in the shop most distinctly but only mumble in the Prayer Meeting. I have sometimes thought I have seen persons who, at the sound of a shilling, seemed to open their ears and start up be just as much the opposite way when it came to doing things for Christfirst and foremost for this world, and last for the world to cometoiling like the ants to gain this worlds dross, but as idle as a butterfly in regard to Divine things. This is so sad, because it proves that it is not lack of power to be active, but lack of will.

Next, it is very easy to send a man to sleep if you give him the chloroform of bad doctrine. That has sent half our Baptist churches to sleep. They have been taught that man is not responsible to God. They have been taught clear fate and nothing betterand they have gone to sleep. And who, indeed, can take a dose of that without slumbering? Then, the sultry sun of prosperity sends many to sleep. You are prospering too much! God seems to be too favorable to you in Providence and then the soul begins to sleep. Fullness of bread is a strong temptation to a Christian. It has been asserted in high church papers that our youthour young men and womenare dissatisfied with our services and system, and they are going to ritualism. I do not believe it!

My observation goes to show it is not the case. There are some attendees of our places of worship who were with us when they were poor, who, having amassed a fortune, have retired to suburban villas and turned to places where they hear a Gospel alien to that which they heard when times were different with them. But it is not the case with the young men and women of our churches! I do not believe the blame rests with them. It is the power of wealth which comes to them. I admire that prayer of Mr. Whitfields for a young man who had come into possession of a large property, that God would give him Divine Grace to persevere under such a trial.

Then in some people it is the intoxication of pride. Get proud of your spiritual condition and that will soon send you to sleep. In others it is the lack of heart which is at the bottom of everything they do. They never were intense. They never were earnest, and consequently they have such little zeal that that zeal soon goes to sleep. This is the age of the Enchanted Ground. He that can go through this age and not sleep must have something more than mortal about himGod must be with him keeping him awake! You cannot be long in the soporific air of this particular period of time without feeling that in spiritual things you grow lax, for it is a lax agelax in doctrine, lax in principle, lax in morals, lax in everythingand only God can come in and help the Pilgrim to keep awake in this Enchanted Ground!

These, then, are some of the things to guard against. My time, unfortunately, is almost gone, and therefore I can only say a few words upon the second point.

II. What did Christ say to His people who were asleep? He said, AWAKE YOU WHO SLEEP, ARISE FROM THE DEAD. Let me have a little quiet talk with you, then, in the Masters name. Remember that Jesus speaks this in love. You never knew him do or say anything that was not in love. Has there ever been anything which has come either from His hands or His lips which has not been in love? Oh, then, believe that He would not have said, Awake! if it were not the kindest thing He could possibly say to you!

He loves you, then, though you love Him so little and go to sleep in His very Presence! And it is His love which shows itself to you in the best possible way by that startling word, Awake! Awake! Awake! Sometimes a mothers love lulls her child to sleep, but if there is a house on fire the mothers love would take another expression and startle it from its slumber. And Christs love takes that turn when He says to you, Awake! Awake! Awake! Again, since Jesus says this to you, be assured that it is His wisdom as well as His love that makes Him say it. He knows that you are losing much by sleeping. The thief is pilfering while you are resting. The sower of the bad seed is scattering it in the field, while you, who ought to have watched, are going away to those unhallowed sleeps.

He would not have you be a loser. He would have you be rich and increased in goods spiritually, and thus it is His wisdom that bids Him wake you. It is a wise voice and a tender voice, which says to the Christian Awake! It is a voice, too, which you ought to listen to, for it is backed up by the authority of the Person from whom it comes. It is your Lord who says, Awake! What has He done for you? Shall I ask you what He has NOT done for you? You owe everything to Him! That robe that is now washed would have been black but for Him. Ah, some of you who are here today, oh, how much do you owe! I know, as I look around at you, what Gods Grace has done for you. Oh, Brother, your voice was the loudest in the tavern! Many a time have you reeled home from the gin palace! Your mouth could once curse and swear, but you are washed!

And as for myself, how much do I owe to the Grace of God! The most stubborn and self-willed of mortals cowed down before the feet of Christ to take and accept Him on His own terms! And ah, there are some of you who, like the Magdalene, would sit and wash His feet with tears, and would be glad to wipe them with the hairs of your head! Some of you mothers here owe all your childrens souls to Him as well as your own. He saved your darlings! He has brought them to put their trust in Christ. Oh, we are over our head and ears in debt to Christ! We are what good Rutherford used to call, drowned debtors to Christ!

Oh the depths of our obligation! Oh, how high should be the heights of our gratitude since He has done so much for us! If He says, Awake!oh, Master, we would not only awake, but we would crave Your pardon a thousand times that ever we should have fallen into this sinful sleep! It is your Lord that speaks! It is your Master that cries, Awake! Awake! Oh, loyal hearts and virgin souls, by the lilies of your love, and by the roses of His blood with which He bought you, awake! Awake! Awake, and ask for an earnestness which you may never lose again.

Further, this is a voice which has been very often repeated. Christ has been saying, Awake! Awake! to some of us hundreds of times. You were sick, were you, a few months ago? That was Christ, as it were, shaking you in your sleep, and saying, Awake, My Beloved, awake out of your unhealthy slumber! You had a loss in business the other day and you bemoaned it very much. Perhaps that, too, was the Master saying, Awake! A dear child was taken from you and borne to Heavenit was Christ saying to you, Awake!

And we have had many awakenings in this House of Prayer. I am sure our Monday evening Prayer Meetings have often been a voice to us Awake! Awake! Sometimes a sermon, too, has come home from God to our hearts withAwake! Awake! Awake! Oh, shall we never awake? Shall Christ stand always at yonder door with its rusty hinges and shall He always say, Open unto Me, My Love, My Dove, for My head is wet with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night? Shall He always be shut out? Will we never open the door to Him and say, We wake, Lord, we wake! Come in and sup with us that we may sup with You?

Now it seems to me as if it were a personal cry in the text. Did you notice the singular pronounAwake, you who sleep? It does not say, Awake all of you, but Awake, you! Shall I pick you out one by one? There are too many of you for that. But I might say, my dear venerable, gray-headed Friend, if there is any tendency in you to slumber, Jesus says, Awake, you. And you, Maiden, you who have given your heart to your Savior in your young days, He says, Awake, you that sleep! And you, young Man with many talents which you do not lay out for Christ as you oughtHe says, Awake, you that sleep. And to the most slumbering of us, He seems to say it most loudly and most lovingly, Awake, you that sleep. May such a warning come home very personally!

And to close this point I may add that He puts it very pressingly in the present tense: Awake, He said, awake now. Oh, it is very easy to say, I hope I shall awake one day. But He says, Awake now! It is not what you will do in a few years, but now, now, NOW! I do not say that the word, now, is in the text, but it is there truly, in spirit. Awake. If I say to a man, Awake! I do not mean that he is to awake in an hours timethat would be absurd! I mean him to awake NOW. And Jesus says this to us friends who know His love and who have been visited by His Divine GraceHe says to usAwake now, My Beloved, and come forth to serve Me.

III. But I must close, and the last point is THE PROMISE WITH WHICH CHRIST ENCOURAGES US TO AWAKE. The promise is, Christ shall give you light. What does that mean? Why, light may mean sometimes instruction. We are often in the dark and puzzled about difficulties. But do you know half the difficulties in the Bible spring from a cold state of mind? When the heart gets right, the head seems to get right, too, in a great measure. I remember a person puzzling himself fearfully with that passage in Scripture about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. He went and looked at Dr. Gill about it. He went to Thomas Scott about it, and he went to Matthew Henry about itand these good Divines all puzzled him as much as they couldthey did not seem to clear up the matter.

The good man could not understand how Jesus Christ could say, as He did, How often would I have gathered you, but you would not! One day he received more Divine Grace and developed a love for souls. And then the old skin of narrow-mindedness which had been once large enough for him, began to crack and break, and he went to the passage and said, I can understand it now! I do not know how it is consistent with such-and-such a doctrine, but it is very consistent with what I feel in my heart.

And I feel just the same. I used to be puzzled by that passage where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from God for his Brethrens sake. Why, I have often felt the same, and now I understand how a man can say in the exuberance of his love to others that he would be willing to perish himself if he might save them! Of course it never could be done but such is the extravagance of a holy love for souls that it breaks through reason and knows no bounds! Get the heart right and you get right upon many difficult points.

Again, I think the light here meant is a further kind of lightnot merely the light of direction, guidance, and knowledgebut chiefly the light of joy. Oh, there are some of you who are generally in the dark! You do not know whether you are Christians or not, half the time. You are spelling out your evidences, and so on. I compare you to a man who is almost drowned. He is alive, but how do they know it? Why, they have to hold a glass up to his month, and if there is a little steam, then they say, Yes, he breathes. Well, there are some of you who need such an experiment as that tried upon youfor nobody would know that you are alive except by some very delicate test. The Christian existence is within you, but the manifestation is so feeble that it is not seen. You do not know whether you are alive or not!

Why, nobody ever doubts whether he is alive! A man in health never says, I do not know whether I am alive or not. He goes to workhe takes his plow and drives it across the field, or goes to his business and works all day longand he knows he is alive by what he does. And if some of you Christian people would only wake up from your sleepy state and begin to labor for God, and to love souls, you would get such joy flooding through your spirits as you never knew before! It would be as though Heaven had opened up its floodgates and let the river of the Water of Life come bursting into your soul! And instead of being like a dry, howling wilderness, there would be a standing pool of waterno, a place in which the ships of your joy, and the galley with oars of your delight, might sail for many a day!

More Divine Grace and more peace, more light and more joyI pray God that you may have these. I have often prayed to God that I might not be the pastor of an army of invalids. I would be glad enough to comfort them and do my best to make this a hospital for them. But I want to be the captain of an army of soldiers and to turn this place into a barracks for them! I want you to go out every day from Monday till Saturday, and on Sunday, too, fighting for Christ, contending for the faith, seeking to gather in outcasts, looking after the poor and needy, helping the weak and feeble, comforting the disconsolate, and putting out all your strength in your Masters cause!

We have enough Churches in London where they sleep. Oh, may God deliver us from having this place to be a huge cemetery, and make us to be a great House, a great City from which shall go forth the hosts and armies of the Lord to do battle for Him! May God send His Holy Spirit to abide among us in all His plenitude, and He shall have the glory!

Now you all see this sermon is to the Christian. I tried to preach to seekers this morning [#714a Savior Such As You Need] and gave them their turn, then. But if there is one here who has not found the Savior, I must add this word to him. The way of salvation is thisTrust Christ and you are saved! Christ suffered in the place of His people. God laid their sin on Him and punished Him as if He were they. And whoever trusts Christ is forgiven. He is saved! And when he is saved then I invite him to exert his strength for his Master. But till then look at home and then look at Jesus, and God grant that this look at yourselves and at your Savior may be the means of your salvationto the praise of the glory of His Divine Grace.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2111 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT AND DRUNKENNESS WITH WINE   
NO. 2111

DELIVERED ON LORDS DAY EVENING, MAY 26, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18.

WHILE I was reading to you just now, in the fourth and fifth chapters of Pauls letter to the Ephesian Believers, I could not help feeling that you could little understand the elevation and the purity of the precepts of the Apostle, as they must have appeared to the inhabitants of such a wicked city as Ephesus. When first read, these precepts must have seemed like an unearthly light.

We have now a public sentiment which condemns drunkenness, lying, and many other vices which were scarcely considered worthy of censure by that degraded people. Christianity had not affected public sentiment at the timethat sentiment was distinctly immoral. The sin of fornication was scarcely judged to be sinful. Theft was most common, as, indeed, it is in the East to this day. Lying was universal and only blamed if committed so clumsily as to be found out.

I may say of drunkenness, that, although it was not regarded as a commendable thing, yet it was looked upon as a failing of great minds, not to be too much condemned. Alexander the Great, as you know, died through drink. He offered a prize on one occasion to those who could drink the most and in that famous drinking-bout, large numbers of his chieftains and nobility died in the attempt to rival others. Even of such a man as Socrates it is said (though I know not with what truth) that he was famous for the quantity that he could drink.

The stories of the feasts of that age I would be ashamed to repeat. And you certainly would not have the patience to hear them. Drunkenness, and gluttony, and such like were the common faults both of the great and of the small. For while some had no opportunity for gluttonyfor they did not get enough to eatthey only failed to be gluttons for that reason and not from principle. The Apostle sets before his new converts, not a modified system of right and wrong, but the purest virtues and the most heavenly graces.

As the ages have rolled on, we have seen the wisdom of holding up from the first an elevated standard, both of doctrine and practice. We must not bring the standard down to the men but the men up to the standard. We may not, with the design of making converts more rapidly, alter the pure Word with which our Lord has entrusted us.

Brethren, I am not going to speak to you tonight about the sin of drunkenness. Many of you feel an intense aversion to that degrading vice.

If there are any here who require a homily upon drunkenness, they have only to let conscience speak and it will tell them how base a sin it is. If they do not know the shamefulness of their wicked habit, there are plenty round about them who will let them know in indignant language. Perhaps of all the sins that are rife in our country today, drunkenness brings the most present misery upon mankind.

A very large proportion of the want from which people suffer is due to wasteful excess in drink. You know it is so, if you are intelligent observers. Other sins may seem to go deeper into the soul, and are more subject to punishment by our laws. But for creating widespread suffering, suffering brought upon the innocent, upon the wife, and upon the childthis vice raises its head above all others. This throngs our workhouses, fills our jails, and crowds our lunatic asylumsyesand fattens our cemeteries with carcasses of men and women who die before their time.

This is the Moloch of the nineteenth century. I am not going to preach about that one particular vice tonight, as though I would saw off a big limb from the tree of evil. It is my custom to lay the axe at the root of the tree, aiming my blows at the very nature which bears this evil branch. Still, this is a very far spreading limb. And, as I have seen the woodmen lopping the tree before they cut it down, there will be no waste of time if I aim a blow or two at this huge branch of the tree of evil, this bough of drunkenness.

It is far too common to this day. But, thank God, through the efforts of temperance friends and, I hope, through the power of the Spirit of God upon many, it is not as it used to be. And it is regarded now in a very different light from that in which it was viewed even by Christian people years ago.

The Apostle has been pleased, in this passage, guided by the Holy Spirit, to put in apposition and, in some respects, in opposition, a prohibition and a commandBe not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit. He had a reason for putting these two things together. There is a very, very, very wide and deep abyss between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. Drunkenness is down, down, down to the depths of the brute, and far lower stillfullness with the Spirit is up, up, up,   
to the very heights of God.

How did it happen that in the same verse, without a break, Paul should put the two togetherthe prohibition and the command? There was a reason and a very good reason, for this conjunction of things so far apart in character. I think that I see two reasons. The first is because there is a parallel between thema degree of similarity amid their infinite difference. Secondly, he so placed them because there is a contrast between them of a very striking kind. The contrast is as instructive as the parallel. Be not drunk with wine. But hasten to the very opposite extreme and, Be filled with the Spirit.

I. First, LET ME DRAW THE PARALLEL. Why do men become drunk with wine, or other alcoholic liquors? There are several reasons. I shall not mention them all, for they are innumerable and many of them too ridiculous to be mentioned in a sermon.

One motive is to find in wine an exhilaration. It is a feast day. Let us have wine, that we may warm our hearts and laugh and sing and make merry. It is a marriage day. It is a birthday. It is a royal holiday. It is something out of the commonbring forth the wine cup! So say the sons of men. When the man has drunk what he ought to think enough, feeling already a little elevated, he must drink yet more, with the same view. He would rise higher and higher and higher and be filled with glee and jollity and make uproarious laughter and be lord of misrule for the day.

Strong drink is taken to exhilarate. And for a while it has that effect. How some men are carried away when intoxicated! How lifted up they are! What a great man the least becomes! What a Divine the man who never looked into his Bible! What a philosopher the boor that does not know his letters! What a lord of creation the loon who has not two shirts! What a hero, every way, the coward who is afraid of his shadow! He is exhilarated when he has taken wine.

I grant you, that it is natural that we should all wish to be somewhat exhilarated. We like to have stirring times in which we do not lie still and stagnantwe would have our whole nature stirred with pleasure. We like to have our high-days and holidays, even as others. Now, says the Apostle, that you may enjoy the most exquisite exhilaration, be filled with the Spirit. When the Spirit of God comes into a man, with extraordinary power, so as to fill his soul, He brings to his soul a joy, a delight, an elevation of mind, a delightful and healthful excitement which lifts him up above the dull dead level of ordinary life and causes him to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

This is safe delight and therefore I commend it to you. It is safe delight, because it is holy delightholy because it is the Holy Spirit that works it in youand He makes you to delight in everything that is pleasing to the Holy God. Seek no longer the excitement which comes from the flowing bowl. Here is something more safe, more suitable, more sacred, more ennoblingBe filled with the Spirit.

I know there are some Christians who never have much joy. You remember one, an old acquaintance of yours, the elder brother. His experience was expressed to his father in grumbling tonesLo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. Far too many Christians are of that order. Hear what they sayI have always been regular in my attendance on the means of Divine Grace, have read my Bible, have acted consistently with my profession. Yet I know nothing of delight in God.

Now, my dear Friend, take this advice, Be filled with the Spirit. You have, as yet, received only a few drops from the Divine shower of His sacred influences. Ask for the rivers, the floods, the torrents of His sacred power. Let the heavenly floods come in and fill you up to the brimthen will you have a joy which shall rival the bliss of those who are before the Throne of God.

Furthermore, I have known people take wine with the idea of being strengthened by it. There are such individuals still alive in the light of this advanced century. Many of the best physicians tell us that there is no strength whatever in strong drink. At any rate, whatever strength there is in the drink, it does not give any strength to the man. I am not going into physical or metaphysical discussions tonight. There is no doubt that many indulge in wine to an extreme, with the object of getting strength from it. I believe their action to be founded on a very grave mistake.

But to you Christian people, instruction comes in here, Be not drunk with wine, with the view of gaining strength from itbut be filled with the Spirit, for the Spirit of God can give you strength to the highest degree. He can gird you with spiritual strengththe strength of faith. And there is no strength like itfor all things are possible to him that believes. He can give you the strength that wrestles in prayer, that lays hold upon the angel of the Covenant and will not let him go, except he grant a blessing.

The Spirit of God gives the strength to suffer and the strength to labor. The strength to receive and the strength to give out again. The strength to hope, the strength to love, the strength to conquer temptation, the strength to perform holy action. When you are filled with the Spirit, how strong you are! There is no influence about us for good when the Holy Spirit has departed. But when a man gets the Spirit of God to fill him to the full, His presence has a mystic power about it. Though such a man tarries but for a short time in a place, he leaves a savor behind him that will not be forgotten.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, whether you are preachers, or teachers, or parents, or persons engaged in the service of God in your ordinary labor if you want strength with which to bring glory to the Most Highbe filled with the Spirit. Oh, that we had in our midst many that were strong because of this!

In the next place, wine has been taken by a great many and taken to excess, to embolden them. And it does embolden them to a very high degree. A man under the influence of liquor will do what he would never think of doing at any other timehe will be rash, foolhardy, and daring to the last degree. We have heard of foreign nations whose troops have been so afraid of the fight that they have dosed them with strong drink to induce them to march into the battle.

We used to hear the expression, Dutch courage, which meant the boldness which came of ardent spiritsthough I do not suppose the Dutch had more of it than the English. No doubt many a man under the influence of drink has risked his life and performed what looked like feats of valor, when, indeed, he was simply beyond himself and out of his right mind, or he would not have been so foolhardy. Wine does embolden many men in a wrong way.

Beloved Friends, we are not to make ourselves ridiculous with fanaticismbut bold with the Spirit of Truth. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot, in order to be emboldened to do anything. But be filled with the Spirit of the living God, wherein is quietness, and comes a courage which is to be admired and not derided. Oh, how brave a man is when he is filled with the Spirit of God!

Then, knowing a thing to be right, he resolves to do it, and he never counts the cost. He has counted that cost long ago and reckoned that the light suffering that would come by doing right was no longer worthy to be compared with the glory of being found a faithful servant of God. When a man has little of the Spirit of God he begins calculating the pence. Will it pay? The thing is right enough, he says, but then, I cannot afford it. I know that what I am doing is wrong. But, still, I could not give it up. It would involve too much sacrifice.

That man has little, if any, of the Spirit of God. For the Spirit destroys selfishness and all that love of gain which eats as does a canker. A man in whom the Spirit of God dwells abundantly says, I shall never think, from this day forth, what may be to me the consequences of any course of action which the Lord, my God, commands me to follow. If it is right in the sight of God, I will do it. If God approves it, so shall it be. But if it is wrong, not a world made of gold, if it could all be mine, should tempt me to parley for a moment.

Be filled with the Spirit. It will make you bold in the cause of the Lord Jesus. How bold the martyrs were! How bravely humble women were likely to speak up for Christ! How slaves, peasants, persons of no education, faced the Roman governorsyes, stood before the Roman Emperor, himself, and were not in the least afraid! When they cried, To the lions with them! they flinched not from so cruel an end. They were a brave people, those early Christians, for they were filled with the Spirit.

And our men and women in England, in the days of Maryhow bold they were when filled with the Spirit! The Holy Spirit is the creator of heroes. If the Spirit of God is gone, we are a cowardly set. But if the Spirit of God shall come down upon us, as I hope He may, then every man and woman here, however timid by nature, will be able to bear witness for Christ, according as Christ shall call him to that work. O my Beloved, for whom I long and pray that you may be an army for the Lord, Be filled with the Spirit.

Wine has been also taken in large quantities for the destruction of pain, for the drowning of misery, for support in the agony of a cruel death. Solomon says, Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more. It was an old custom, that when a man was doomed and about to die, they gave him some narcotic cup that he might be somewhat stupefied and suffer less.

There was some mercy in this, though truly, the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. No doubt many persons have most foolishly taken to drink in order to forget their grief and assuage their sorrow. We must earnestly condemn such wicked conduct, but still, so it is. And the Apostle puts it, Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit. For that will remove depression and sustain under anguish in a most wonderful way. Indeed, in a holy and perfect way.   
If you want to forget your misery, remember to apply for a sweet visitation of the Comforter. If there has lately happened some great calamity to you and you are saying, How shall I bear it? the answer is, Be filled with the Spirit of God. Here shall you drink oblivion of the heavy trial. Or, better still, you shall forget the sharpness of the trial, in your knowledge that it works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, which makes us not ashamed. O beloved Friend, do not kick at the trial, be willing to bear it. Get more of the indwelling of the sacred Comforter. Be filled with the Spirit.

Perhaps this may be a direction to some dear Friend here who has lately been called to tread a more trying path than usual. How shall I bear it, Sir? How shall I bear it? I never was so tried before. Seek earnestly for more of the Spirit of God than you ever had before. He will give you in proportion to your necessity. He is fully equal to every emergency. His consolations can balance your tribulations. Wait upon Him for the comfort of the Spirit. The day may come when you will glory in your infirmities and afflictions, because God used them to make room for more of His Spirit to dwell in you.

I am certain that if you have to go home tonight to lie for the next twenty years upon a sick bedand certain of Gods saints have not been off the sick bed for all that time. Or if all your property is gone and you are called to endure poverty during the rest of your pilgrimage. Or if you shall hear of the death of the dearest one you haveif the Holy Spirit is but given in a larger measure to youyou will have more happiness and more content and be a better man by reason of all this affliction that has come upon you.

God grant that you may find it to be true that you may forget your poverty and misery and discover no gall in your most bitter cup! May you drink deep draughts of the joy of the Lord till you are filled with the Spirit of God! Touch not the wine cup, lest in this you dishonor the Holy Spirit, who by His own power is able to cheer your heavy heart.

Again, I think a fifth reason why some have been drinking is to arouse themselves. They feel flat, they say. Ah, ah! If I were lecturing tonight, I could give you some of those abundant excuses for drinking which tipplers so readily invent. You can always find reasons, such as they are, when you want to pursue a career of self-indulgence. You may find them of every colorblack, white, red, blue and gray, at every time, every day. The most unreasonable reasons will come cropping up if you want to do what your flesh desires.

But there are some who feel, I want a pick-me-up. I am rather down, seedy, dull. I want something that will brace me, so that I may be up to the mark. By the time the man has had enough of his stimulant he is worse than before. Many have most effectually knocked themselves down in their desire to set themselves up. But, Christian man, if ever you feel dull, be filled with the Spirit. If ever I feel dull! cries one, Why, I often do, even at this time I have come into the House of Prayer, and do not feel as if I could worship.   
Well, then, go where life and strength are to be had. One of our Brethren observed to me the other day (I do not think he meant to flatter me), I often go into the Tabernacle feeling that I cannot worship as I should. But, said he, you always seem to be lively and all right. I thoughtAh, dear Brother! You do not know much about me, or you would not praise me. For I often feel the reverse of livelybut I cannot bear to have it so, lest others should be injured by it.

There is not a more dull or stupid head than mine in this place. But I have a remedy and I fly to itI wish you would all do so. I go to Himyou know His glorious nameHe is the Resurrection and the Life. I look to Him for quickening and it comes. May that be an example to some of you whenever you feel dull! Do not say, I cannot pray today. I cannot sing today. Nogo to the Lord to help you to present acceptable worship.

It would be a great relief to me if I could be excused from preaching to you when I do not feel like preaching. Yet, it would not be a blessing to me, for it would encourage me in dullness and that would be a curse. If you do not pray except when you feel like praying, you will not pray much, nor pray when you most need it. My Brothers and Sisters, when you do not feel like praying, you ought to pray all the more and go to the Lord to help you to pray.

When one does not feel like doing the Lords work, he must say, Out with you, Mr. Sluggard! You must get to your work. Stir yourself up. And here is the hallowed power which will effectually help youBe filled with the Spirit. Oh, that the Spirit of God would make us feel what poor creatures we are, and what a great Savior we have! If He would make us feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, we would burn with love to the souls of men! If He would make us rejoice in pardon bought with blood, see our justification and realize itif we could feel the Spirit of God melting us to tenderness or bracing us to holy braverythen it would be that we are refreshed and stimulated after the best manner.

We, then, would have found the true arousingand there would be no reaction after it, no falling back into a deeper depression. I wish that those who feel dull tonight may be so filled with the Spirit that they will not be content to go to sleep till they have spoken to a poor sinner about salvation and eternal life.

Once more, many men, no doubt, become drunkards from love of what is called good fellowship. Look, said a wife to her husband, how can you drink at the rate you do? Why, a hog would not do so. The wretched man replied, No, I do not suppose that it would. It would be more sensible than I am, no doubt. But, he said, if there was another hog at the other side of the trough that said, I drink to your health, this hog would be obliged to do the same. And if there were half-a-dozen of them together and they kept on toasting one another, I expect the hog would get as drunk as I am.

Sad are the effects of evil fellowship. The fellowship in which people indulge, and which they think it necessary to stimulate themselves by drink, has led many into drunkenness. Now see the beauty of this expression, Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. But be filled with the Spirit. When the Spirit of God comes upon Christian men, what fellowship they have with one another, what delight they take in holy conversation, what joy there is in meeting together for solemn worship!

I do not wonder that it is added immediately after, Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and   
spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. See the effect of being filled with the Spirit? It brings a fellowship of holy music, sacred gratitude and heavenly thanksgiving. It makes us feel concerning the House of Prayer

*I have been there and still would go,   
It is like a little Heaven below.*

It makes us sing with rapture   
*Hail, you days of solemn meeting!   
Hail, you days of praise and prayer!   
Far from earthly scenes retreating,   
In your blessings we would share.   
Sacred seasons,   
In your blessings we would share.*

The Lord grant us Divine Grace to seek our fellowship where He finds it, with holy men and holy women. That among them in joyous fellowship we may rejoice and praise His name.

II. I cannot stay longer on this parallel, I have already been too long now, LET ME POINT OUT THE CONTRAST. I do not think that Paul was running the parallel only, for it would dishonor the work of the Holy Spirit to think that His operations could be in all things likened to the influence of alcohol. No, the Divine inspiration far excels anything that earthly excitements can produce.

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot. But be filled with the Spirit. The contrast is at the very beginning. For it is written, Be filled with the Spirit. Wine does not fill. No man is satisfied with all that he drinks. He is still thirsty. His thirst is often increased by that which was supposed to quench it. The Spirit of God has a satisfying, satiating, never nauseating influence upon the heart. It fills it to the very brim, until the man delights himself in God and cries, My cup runs over.

Then the saint becomes like the tribe of which we read, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor and full with the blessing of the Lord. Wine ministers to lust and lust is a burning sense of want. But the Spirit of the Lord brings fullness with it and a perfect rest of heart.

Wine creates riot, says the Apostle. And that is the second point of contrast. When men are drunken, what a noise they will make! They are ready for any disturbance. But the Holy Spirit, when you are full of Him, makes you quiet with a deep, unutterable peace. I do not say that you will not sing and rejoice, but there will be a deep calm within your spirit. I wish that some Christian people were filled with the Spirit, if there were no other effect produced upon them but that of peace, self-possession, restfulness and freedom from passion.

Our friends, the members of the Society of Friends, who speak much of the Spirit of God, whatever virtues they may not have, certainly have this onethat they are, usually, a very quiet, unexcitable, peaceable people. We want more Christians of this sort. We can put up with all the uproar of the Salvation Army, if it comes in very deed from warm hearts and genuine zeal. I will not find any fault with them for a little noise, though the less of it the better. If your genius goes that way, sing unto the Lord and blow your trumpet.

But at the same time, the solid people in the Church are those who possess their souls, who go about their business, suffer and labor with an inward peace which is not disturbed. They have a holy calm which is not ruffled. Do not create riot, but abide in holy peace by being filled with the Spirit. May the Lord keep you in perfect peace with your minds stayed on Him.

The next point of contrast is that wine causes contention. When men are drunken with it, how ready they are to quarrel! They make a harmless word to be an insult. Many a man, when full of wine, will bear nothing at allhe is ready to fight anybody and everybodyhe cannot have his fill of fighting. But when you are filled with the Spirit, what is the result? Why, peaceful submission. Listen to thisSubmitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Human nature likes rule. But the Spirit of God works submissiveness of mind. Instead of wanting to be first, the truly spiritual man will be satisfied to be last, if he can thus glorify God. That man who must be always king of the castle is not filled with the Spirit of God. But he that is willing to be a doormat, on which the saints may wipe their feet, is great in the kingdom of Heaven. Be filled with the Spirit and you will soon submit to inconvenience, misapprehension, and even exaction for the sake of doing good to those who are out of the way and in the hope of edifying the people of God. Wine causes riot. The Spirit causes peace. Drunkenness causes contention. The Spirit of God causes submission.

Furthermore, drunkenness makes men foolish. But the Spirit of God makes them wise. I am keeping to the connection of my text. Read the fifteenth verse, See, then, that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. The drunken man cannot walk at all, because he has not made up his mind as to which way he will go. He attempts to go two ways and ends up staggering till he falls. The man filled with the Spirit has a very definite idea of which way he is going. He knows the right way and he deliberately chooses it. He perceives the strait and narrow way and he steadfastly follows itfor God has made him wise. Folly clings to the wine cup. But wisdom comes with the Holy Spirit.

Drunkenness wastes time. But the Spirit of God, when we are filled with Him, makes us save it. Read the sixteenth verseRedeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore be you not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot. How much of time is wasted over the unholy cup! But the child of God, when the Spirit of God enters into him, makes a conscience of his odd moments and leisure minutes. As goldsmiths sweep up the very dust of their shops, that no filings of the precious metal may be lost, so does the Christian man, when filled with the Spirit, use his brief intervals. It

is wonderful what may be done in odd minutes. Little spaces of time may be made to yield a great harvest of usefulness and a rich revenue of glory to God. May we be filled with the Spirit in that respect!

In the next place, drunkenness makes men forget their relationships, but the Holy Spirit makes us remember them. The rest of the chapter goes on to mention our domestic conditions as wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, masters. The drunken man is bad in every relation and the drunken woman is, if possible, worse. The drunken man ought never to be a husband, but he sometimes wears that name, and then he has a power to inflict misery which he is sure to use to the utmost. The drunken man will often do towards his wife what I will not trust my lips to speak ofit would be a libel on the brutes of the stall, or the beasts of the jungle, to liken him to them.

A drunken father! Is he worth calling father? And it is even worse, if worse can be, when it is a drunken wife or a drunken mother. A special infamy hovers around womanhood soaked in liquorrelationships, in such instances, are quite forgotten under the influence of the accursed drink. Selfishness eats up the very heart of those who otherwise might have been the objects of reverence and love. The contrast to this is the fact that when filled with the Spirit, the husband is the most tender of husbands, the wife the best of wives.

No master is so just as the man that is mastered by the Spirit of God! No servant so diligent as he that serves the Lord. By the Holy Spirit, our relationships become ennobled. And what was but a commonplace position wears a glory of holiness about it. We are transfigured by the Spirit of God, and we transfigure everything we touch. Dear Friends, you see that the contrast is a very vivid one. Look into it very narrowly, and it will repay the inspection.

Lastly, excess of drink leaves a man weak and exposed to peril. But to be filled with the Spirit!listen to what comes of it according to the tenth verse of the next chapterFinally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. When filled with the Spirit the man is no longer naked, like the drunkard. He no longer lies upon the ground in danger as one overcome with wine. He is no longer open to the attack of adversaries, as one who sleeps through strong drink. God has made him strong and armed himand now he goes forth to fight in the service of his Master. I think that you will see the contrast. It is as evident as the parallel.

I shall keep you no longer except to say this. My beloved Christian Friends, our hearts desire is that the members of this Church and, indeed, all the members of Christs mystical body, should be filled with the Spirit. Oh, that you may come absolutely under the sway of the Holy Spirit and may abide under His most powerful inspirations! Do you ask how this is to be? First, reverently regard Him. Worship Him. Speak not of the Holy Spirit as it. Talk not of the Third Person of the adorable Trinity as an influence. He is very God of very God. God has guarded the sanctity of the Holy Spirit by causing a certain sin to be especially condemned and unpardonablethe sin against the Holy Spirit. Honor Him much, then worship Him and adore Him and look to Him for help.

Next, do not grieve Him. If there is anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit, let it grieve you, so that you may keep clear of it. Put away every thought, idea, principle and act that is not agreeable to His mind. Neither live in sin, nor trifle with evil, nor fall into error, nor neglect the reading of the Word of God, nor fail to obey the commands of the Lord. Do not grieve the Comforter but welcome Him as your best Friend. Open your heart to His influences. Watch each day to hear His monitions. Pray every morning, Holy Spirit, speak with me, bedew me, enlighten me, set me on fire, dwell in me. And during the day lament to yourself if you do not feel the Spirit of God moving in you and ask why it is. Has He left me? Is He grieved with me? Say

*Return, O holy Dove! return,   
Sweet Messenger of rest!   
I hate the sins that made You mourn,   
And drove You from my breast.*

As you welcome Him when He comes, so be fit for Him to come to you and dwell in you. Be clean, for He is pure. Do not expect the Holy Spirit to dwell in a foul chamber. You cannot make that chamber like Solomons temple, wherein the cedar wood was overlaid with pure gold. But you can take care that it is well cleansed. Only the pure in heart shall see God. Oh, for a clean life, a clean tongue, a clean hand, a clean ear, a clean eye, a clean heart! God give you these and then you shall be ready for the Spirit of God to dwell in you.

And when He does come, learn this thing. If you would have Him fill you, obey Him. If you believe that an impulse is from the Spirit of God, follow it out. Never trifle with conscienceespecially you that are beginning life. Mind you set the tune for the whole of your life by the tenderness of your consciences at the first. When I was a lad I learned a certain Truth of God, which my friends and relatives did not knowbut I had to follow my conscience. It looked very egotistical and wayward for a lad to set up his opinion against older people. But I could not help it.

I saw Believers Baptism in the Bible and therefore the highest Law compelled me to be obedient to that ordinance. I looked over the matter again and again, to see if it was not soand I became more and more assured as to the mind of the Lord. Therefore I was not disobedient. It is true that it was suggested to me that if I did follow out my views, I should have to cut out quite another career for myself from the one anticipated. But I could not help that. I must do the Lords will, whatever might be the consequences.

From that day to this I have never had cause to regret my youthful decision. The trial was severe at the time, but it was beneficial to my whole character. It taught me to follow the Truth of God wherever it might lead me and to expect the Spirit of God to abide with me in so doing Since then I have often come to a place where interest has gone one way and principle has gone another. But it has not cost me half-a-minutes thought which way should be my way. I must follow what I believe to be right and true, and preach what I believe to be Gods Word. And I will, by Gods Grace, do so, whether men hear or whether they ignore.

Young Men, young Women, mind you begin straight. Do not begin with truckling and making compromises. If you take your hats off to the devil today, you will have to take your shoes off to him soon. And by-and-by you will become utterly his slaves. Be strong for the Truth of God. Quit yourselves like men. Stand fast for God and holiness. You will be filled with the Spirit if you are obedient to Him.

If you are filled with the Spirit of God and wish to retain His gracious Presence, speak about Him. Note this, Be not drunk with wine, wherein is riot. But be filled with the Spirit; speaking. That is a curious word to follow so soon. The Holy Spirit is not a dumb Spirit. He sets us speaking. Speaking to yourselves. It is a poor audience. But still it is a choice audience if you speak to your Brethren. Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Beloved, when the Spirit of God fills you, you will not only speak, but sing. Let the holy power have free coursedo not quench the Spirit. If you feel like singing all the while, sing all the while and let others know that there is a joy in the possession of the Spirit of God which the world does not understand but which you are feeling and to which you wish to bear witness.

Oh, that the Spirit of God would come upon this entire Church and fill you all to overflowing! May the members of other Churches that are here tonight take home fire with them and set their Churches on flame! The Lord bless you, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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ALWAYS AND FOR ALL THINGS   
NO. 1094

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 2, 1873, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.   
Ephesians 5:20.

THE position of our text in the Epistle is worthy of observation. It follows the precept with regard to sacred song in which Believers are bid to speak to themselves and one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. If they cannot be always singing they are always to maintain the spirit of song. If they must, of necessity, desist at intervals from outward expressions of praise, they ought never to refrain from inwardly giving thanks. The Apostle, having touched upon the act of singing in public worship, here points out the essential part of it which lies not in classic music and thrilling harmonies, but in the melody of the heart. Thanksgiving is the soul of all acceptable singing.

Note, also, that this verse immediately precedes the Apostles exhortations to Believers concerning the common duties of ordinary life. The saints are to give thanks to God always and then to fulfill their duties to their fellow men. The Apostle writes, Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God, and then he adds the various branches of holy walking which belong to wives and to husbands, to children and to parents, to servants and to mastersso that it would seem that thanksgiving is the preface to a holy life, the foundation of obedience and the vestibule of sanctity. He who would serve God must begin by praising God, for a grateful heart is the mainspring of obedience. We must offer the salt of gratitude with the sacrifice of obedienceour lives should be anointed with the precious oil of thankfulness. As soldiers march to music, so while we walk in the paths of righteousness we should keep step to the notes of thanksgiving. Larks sing as they mount, so should we magnify the Lord for His mercies while we are ringing our way to Heaven.

My text is a very appropriate one for this cold morning when wind and snow conspire against our comfort. Let it peep up like the golden cup of the crocus out of the wintry waste. When the weather is unusually dull and dreary we should resolve to set a stout heart against the pelting storm and determine that if we shiver in body we will at least be warm in heart. Our thanksgiving is not a swallow which is gone with the summer. The birds within our bosom sing all year round and on such a morning as this their song is doubly welcome. The fire of gratitude will help to warm us heap on the big logs of loving memories! No cold shall freeze the genial current of soulour praise shall flow on when brooks and rivers are bound in chains of ice.   
Let us see which among us can best rejoice in the Lord in ill weather!

This morning I shall ask you to think over the pleasant duty prescribed. Then I shall lead you to think of its spiritual prerequisites, or what is necessary to help a man to give thanks always for all things. And we will close by dwelling upon the eminent excellencies of the duty, or rather of the privilege which is here described.

I. First, let us think of the PLEASANT DUTY which is here both prescribed and described. Think what it isgiving thanks. By this is meant the emotion of gratitude and the expression of it either by song, by grateful speech, by the thankful lookwhich means far more than words can expressor by any other method. We have, sometimes, been so overcome by the devout emotion of gratitude to God for His mercy that we could not help but weep. And strange it is that the same sluices which furnish vent for our sorrows also supply a channel for the overflow of our joys. We may weep to Gods praise if we feel it to be most natural. We are to give thanks in our spirit, feeling not only resigned, acquiescent, and content, but grateful for all that God does to us and for us.

We are bound to show this gratitude by our actions, for obedience is at once the most sincere and the most acceptable method of giving thanks. To go about irksome and laborious duty cheerfully is to thank God. To bear sickness and pain patiently, because it is according to His will, is to thank God. To sympathize with suffering saints for love of Jesus is to bless God. And to love the cause of God and to defend it for Christs sake, is to thank God. The angels, when they praise God, not only sing, Hallelujah, hallelujah, but they obey, doing His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word. We must give thanks to God in every shape that shall be expressive of our hearts and suitable to the occasion. And although changing the mode, we may thus continue without cessation to give thanks unto God, even the Father.

Beloved, after all it is but a light thing to render to our heavenly Father our poor thanks, after He has given us our lives, maintained us in being, saved our souls through the precious redemption of Jesus Christ, given us to be His children and made us heirs of eternal Glory! What are our thanks in the presence of all these priceless favors? Why, if we gave our God a thousand lives and could spend each one of these in a perpetual martyrdom, it were a small return for what He has bestowed upon us! But to give Him thanks is the least we can do and shall we be slack in that? He gives us breath, shall we not breathe out His praise? He fills our mouth with good things, shall we not speak well of His name?

*Words are but air and tongues but clay,   
And His compassions are Divine.*

Shall we fail even with words and tongues? God forbid! We will praise the name of the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. None of us will say, I pray You have me excused. The poorest, weakest and least-gifted person can give thanks! The work of thanksgiving does not belong to the man of large utterance, for he who can hardly put two words together can give thanks. Nor is it confined to the man of large possessions, for the woman who had but two miteswhich make a farthinggave substantial thanks. The smoking flax may give thanks that it is not quenched and the bruised reed may give thanks that it is not broken. Even the dumb may give thankstheir countenance can smile a Psalm! And the dying can give thankstheir placid brow beaming forth a hymn. No Christian, therefore, can honestly say, I am unable to exercise the delightful privilege of giving thanks. We may one and all at this moment give thanks unto God our Father. Brothers and Sisters, let us do so!

Now, as we have considered what it is we are to do, let us notice when we are to do it, for the pith of the precept lies very much in the two alls which are in the textalways for all things. We are to give thanks always. To give thanks, sometimes, is easy enough. Any mill will grind when the wind blows. Brethren, we scarcely need exhorting to do this when the wine and oil increase, for we cannot help it. There are glad days when, if we did not thank God, we should be something worse than fallen men and should be only fit to be compared with devils. Anyone can give God thanks when the harvests are plentiful, the stalls full of fat cattle and the meadows covered with increasing herds. When the fig tree blossoms and the fruit is in the vines, when the labor of the olive fails not and the fields yield abundance of meat, then it is but natural to give thanks. When health enjoys life and wealth adorns it, who will not say, I thank God? When the wind blows soft on the merchants cheek and wafts home his fleets of treasure, how can he do other than say that God is good?

But, to give thanks to God always is another matter. To bless the Lord in all winds and weathers and praise Him for losses and painsthis is a work of quite another character. O, you say, we cannot be always praising God with our lips. I have already said that and explained that vocal thanksgiving is not essential. Perhaps the most doubtful form of praising God is that which is performed by the tongue and the most sure and truthful way of giving thanks is that which is found in the actions of common life. But we are to be always praising God under some shape or otherthe heart is always to be full of gratitude. At all times of the day we should be gratefulour first waking thought should be, Bless the Lord. Our last, before we drop to sleep, should be, Praise be the God of love, who gives a pillow for my weary head.

At all times of life we should give thanks. In youth we should praise God for godly parents and for early Grace. In our mid-life we should give thanks for strength, for household joys and for the experience of the Divine loving kindness. And, certainly, in those mature days, when the head, like the golden grain, bows down with ripeness, the aged saint should commence the employment of Heaven and should be always giving thanks. We should give God thanks when our wealth increases and also when it melts awaywhen it flows in and when it ebbs out. We must bless Him in success and also in disaster. We must give Him thanks when health departs. We must give Him thanks when, by gradual decay, the tabernacle falls about our ears. We must give Him thanks in those expiring moments when the sigh of earth is hushed by the song of Heaven.

It is easy to stand here and tell you this, but I have not always found it easy to practice the duty. I confess this to my shame. When I was suffering extreme pain some time ago, a Brother in Christ said to me, Have

you thanked God for this? I replied that I desired to be patient and would be thankful to recover. Ah, but, he said, in everything give thanks, not after it is over, but while you are still in it and, perhaps, when you are enabled to give thanks for the severe pain, it will cease. I believe that there was much force in that good advice. It may have sounded rather strange at the time, yet if there is Grace in our hearts, we acknowledge the correctness of it. We struggle after the holy joy of heart which it depicts and at last, by Gods Grace, are able to attain to it, so as to give thanks unto God unceasingly.

We shall never come to a time in which we shall say, I will thank God no more. No. No! A thousand times No! We could sooner cease to live than cease to give thanks. This solemn determination enables Believers to play the man right gloriously. Was not it grand on Jobs part to sayThe Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord, even when he had torn his mantle and shaved his head for grief? Was not it noble on the part of Paul and Silas, when they were thrust into the inner dungeon, to sing praises there? None of us knows how foul the air was in an inner Roman dungeonhow full of fever the dismal vault, how dank the dripping wallshow foul the stony floor.

Yet, here were two poor creatures who had been beaten till their backs were bleeding. They were fastened in the stocks, probably made to lie upon their backs upon the floor! But, at midnight they sang praises unto God so loudly that the prisoners heard them. This, it is, to praise God arightto bless Him in the dead of night! To bless Him with bleeding backs! To bless Him with feet in the stocks! Oh, to feel that nothing in this life and nothing in death shall make us cease to bless the Lord while thought and being last! This is Divine Grace, indeed!

The text next tells us the why of our gratitudeGiving thanks always for all things unto God. For all thingsfor whatever may happen to us. For the things which are of greatest moment we should always be gratefulfor the new birth, for pardon of sin, for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for all Covenant mercies, for all the blessings of the Cross and of the Crown. Dear Friends, a Christian has infinite cause for gratitude! When I first looked to Christ and was lightened, I thought that if I never received another mercy except that one of being delivered from my load of guilt, I would praise God if He would but let me, forever and ever! To have the feet taken out of the miry clay and to feel them set on the Rock of Ages is a subject for eternal gratitude! But you have not received one spiritual mercy only, beloved Brothers and Sistersnor two, nor twentyyou have had them strewn along your path in richest profusion! The stars above are not more numerous, nor the sands beneath more innumerable.

Every hour, yes, every moment has brought a favor upon its wings. Look downward and give thanks, for you are saved from Hell! Look on the right hand and give thanks, for you are enriched with gracious gifts! Look on the left hand and give thanks, for you are shielded from deadly ills! Look above you and give thanks, for Heaven awaits you! Nor is it alone for great and eternal benefits, but even for minor and temporary benefits we ought to give thanks. There ought not to be brought into the house a loaf of bread without thanksgiving. Nor should we cast a coal upon the fire without gratitude. We eat like dogs if we sit down to our meals without devoutly blessing God! We live like serpents if we never rise to devout recognition of the Lords kindness! We ought not to put on our garments without adoring God, or take them off to rest in our beds without praising Him! Each breath of air should inspire us with thanks and the blood in our veins should circulate gratitude throughout our system.

O, how sacred would our temporal mercies be to us if we were always thanking God for them! Instead of that, we too often complain because we have not somewhat more. We have a position which, in Gods sight, is the best for us. We could not have been better off than we are now, all things being consideredeternal things as well as present thingsand yet we murmur and groan as though God had dealt harshly with us. The worst of all is that sometimes the poorest are the most thankfulthose dear souls that are always sick and never have a waking moment free from pain are often the happiest and most gratefulwhile persons with wealth, health, strength and surrounded by every comfort are often of such a crooked disposition that they complain, they know not why, and are most disagreeable companions. God save you, who are His saints, from ever falling into a murmuring spirit! It is clean contrary to what God can approve of. Give thanks always for all things. Whenever the salt is put on the table let us see in it a lesson to us to season our conversation with thanks, of which salt we cannot use too much.

We ought, also, to thank God for the mercies which we do not see, as well as for those which are evident. We receive, perhaps, 10 times as many mercies which escape our notice as those which we observe mercies which fly by night on soft wings and bless us while we sleep. You have heard, perhaps, of a Puritan who met his son, each one of them traveling some 10 or 12 miles to meet the other? And the son said to his father, Father, I am thankful to God for a very remarkable Providence which I have had on my journey here. My horse has stumbled three times with me and yet I am unhurt. The Puritan replied, My dear Son, I have to thank God for an equally remarkable Providence on my way to you, for my horse did not

once stumble all the way.

If we happen to be in an accident by railway we feel so grateful that our limbs are not broken. But should we not be thankful when there is no accident? Is not that the better thing of the two? If you were to fall into poverty and someone were to restore you to your former position in trade, you would be very grateful. Should you not be grateful that you have not fallen into poverty? Bless God for His unknown benefits! Extol Him for favors which you do not seealways giving thanks to God for all things. Still, this is easythe difficult point is to give thanks to Him for the bitter things, for the disguised blessings, for the love tokens which come to us from Him in black envelopesfor those benefits which travel to us via crucis, by the way of the cross, which are generally the most heavily laden wagons that ever come from our Fathers country.

We are to give thanks for the dark things, the cutting things, the things which plague and vex us and disquiet our spiritsfor these are among the all things for which we ought to praise and bless God. Doubtless, if our eyes were opened, like those of Elijahs servant, we should see our trials to be among our choicest treasures! If we exercise the farseeing eyes of faith and not the dim eyes of sense, we shall discover that nothing can be more fatal to us than to be without affliction and that nothing is more beneficial to us than to be tried as with fire. Therefore we will glory in tribulations! We will bless and magnify the name of the Lord that He leads us through the wilderness that He may prove us and that He may fit us for dwelling by-and-by in the Promised Land. Giving thanks always for all things.

I should like to be towards God of the mind that John Bradford was towards Queen Mary. When reviled as a rebel, that saint and martyr said, I have no quarrel with the queen. If she releases me I will thank her. If she imprison me I will thank her. If she burns me I will thank her. We should say of the Lord, Let Him do what seems good to Him. If He will give us health we will thank Him. If He will send us sickness we will thank Him. If He indulges us with prosperity or if He tries us with affliction, if the Holy Spirit will but enable us, we will never cease to praise the Lord as long as we live.

Augustine tells us that the early saints, when they met each other would never separate without saying, Deo gratias! Thanks be to God. Frequently their conversation would be about the persecutions which raged against them, but they finished their conversation with, Deo gratias! Sometimes they had to tell of dear Brothers and Sisters devoured by the beasts in the amphitheatre, but even then they said, Deo gratias! Frequently they mourned the uprise of heresy, but this did not make them rob the Lord of His, Deo gratias. So should it be with us all the day long. The motto of the Christian should be, Deo gratias! Giving thanks always for all things.

But the text has another word which is importantto whom is this gratitude to be rendered? Giving thanks for all things to God the Father. To God. To man we are bound to render thanks in proportion as he benefits us. God does not require that in order to be grateful to Him we should be ungrateful to our fellow men. To keep the first table it is never necessary to break the second. Gratitude to parents and friends is but gratitude to God if it is properly rendered with a view to the highest Benefactor. To neglect the lower would be to spoil the higher gratitude. Yet we should never end with gratitude to menthat were to thank the clouds for rain instead of blessing the Lord who sends both clouds and showers. Remember, if you have benefactors, God inclined their hearts towards you. Give thanks to God for He is good and does good. Give thanks to God. Let not your gratitude stop short of the Source from which the streams of mercy come.

Think of the Lord, also, under the relation which the text sets before younamely as the Fatheras your Father. Remember that God is the Creator. It is He that made us and not we, ourselves. As the Father, He is the Sustainer and Preserver of men. As the Father He has elected His people, for it is the Father who has chosen His people in Christ Jesus. And, as the Father, He is the Progenitor of the spiritual seed, for He has begotten us, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Think of God the Father in those various capacities and you will have so many reasons for giving thanks always unto Him. Never give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as to dishonor the Father. You owe much to Jesus, but Jesus did not make the Father gracious to you since, the Father Himself loves you, Jesus is the gift of His Fathers love and not the cause of it. Bless the Father, then, and, give honor and praise unto Him who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is an old Jewish tradition that when God had made this world and the six days work was over, He called the angels to behold it and it was so very beautiful that they sang for joy. Then the Lord asked them what they thought of this work of His hands. One of them replied that it was so vast and so perfect that there should be created a clear, loud, melodious voice which should fill all the quarters of the world with its sweet sound and, both by day and night, offer thanksgiving to the Creator for His incomparable blessings. We ought to be of the same mind as the angelnot that there is a defect in creationbut that everywhere in creation intelligent beings should be that voice of ceaseless song which the angel desired.

Once more, in describing this duty the text tells us how to give thanks, namely, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now here we have directions to present our praises always through the Mediator, Jesus, our great High Priest, who stands between us and God. We are to put our thanks into His sacred hands, that He may present them before the Father with something of His own, not to our loss, even with His precious merit which shall sweeten all. But the text means more than that. We are to give thanks to the Father in the name of Jesus, that is, because Jesus bids us to do so and we are commanded and commissioned by Christ. We have His example as well as His precept for blessing God for all things.

I think the text means more than thiswe are to give thanks to God in the name of Jesus as though we did it in Jesus steadas though we stood where Jesus once stood when He said on earthI thank You, O Father. You Christian people are sent into the world as Christ was sent into the world. Christs office was to glorify God and such is your office for His sake and in His name. Thinkhow would Jesus have given thanks? How would He have praised God? In what sort of spirit would the ever adorable Son, whose meat and drink it was to serve His Father, have praised God? After that fashion and in that same way you are to give thanks unto God and the Father. It is a high position for a poor son of man to occupy, but if the Lord has called you to itby His Grace be not slack in the performance of the heavenly service! The day will come when we shall fulfill our text in the widest sensethen we shall give thanks to God at the winding up of the drama of human history, for everything that has happened from the Fall even to the destruction of the wicked.

We may not be able to do so now. Our eyes see the gigantic evil and do not see the overruling good which, like a boundless sea, rolls over all. The dreadful mysteries of evil make us tremble as we think of them. But the day will come when, with the Lord Jesus, we will not only bless God for electing love, but will even say, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent. The day will come when even the darkest side of the Divine decrees and the most profound depths of the Divine action shall cause us to adore with gratitude. And then that which can least be understood in Providence shall no longer be the subject of awe-struck wonder, but of unspeakable delight.

We shall trace the line of perfection along the course of the Divine decrees and workings and though the way of the Lord may have seemed to us to be inscrutable, we shall then adore Him for that wondrous display of all His attributesJustice, Love, Truth, Faithfulness, Omnipotence which shall blaze forth with tenfold splendor! In Heaven we shall give thanks unto God always for all things, without exceptionand throughout eternity we shall magnify His holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord! Let us do it as best we can today, Gods Spirit helping us. Thus I have expounded the duty itself.

II. Now, briefly, let me speak to you upon THE SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES which are necessary for the performance of this very pleasant work. And let it be solemnly remembered that no man can give thanks always to God through Jesus Christ till he has a new heart. The old heart is an ungrateful one and even if a man should try with an unrenewed nature to give thanks to God, it would be like the impossible supposition of the dead struggling to make themselves alive, which cannot be. The old heart is a putrid fountain. It cannot send forth sweet streams. It is opposed to God and it cannot bless Him in a way that He can accept. Looking at this fair and lovely duty, I would say to all who wish to practice it, you must be born-again. Unless you are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, you can never give thanks to God always for all things.

And next I would remind you that in order to perform this duty aright a man must have a sense of God. To give thanks to God aright a man must believe that there is a God. He must go further than thathe must feel that God is the Author of the good things which he receives and, to give thanks always, he must advance yet further and believe that even in seeming evil love is at work. He must also come to believe in God as present to hear his thanks, or he will soon tire of presenting them. You God see me must be printed on the new-born heart, or else there will be no constant giving of thanks to God. Let me ask you, dear Friend, you believe in God and you do well, but have you done better than the devils who also believe in God? They tremblehave you gone as far as that?

There are some who have not. Devils cannot, however, love God and give Him thankshave you gone beyond the trembling of a devil up to the giving thanks and the adoration of a truly loving heir of Heaven? Answer that questionis God as real to you as your wife or child? As real as yourself? He must be so and you must know Him to be always present with you or else you will never continue praising Him. A man who gives thanks to God always, for all things, must have a sense of complete reconciliation to God. You cannot bless God till you have heard Him say, I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions. Lean and false are the thanks which come from an unforgiven heart. A soul condemned for its unbelief is not a soul that can be accepted for its gratitudeit cannot be condemned for one thing and accepted for another.

As I came here, this morning, I was thinking very joyfully of another morning many years ago, which was, as to snow and cold, precisely like it. I remember when the family to which I belonged felt unable to go up to the House of God, for the snow was deep and falling heavily as it is now. I, also, was unable to go up to the place of worship where our household usually attended and, by reason of the snow, was drifted into the little Methodist Chapel where I heard of Jesus and found peace with God! I have learned to bless His name since thenbut before that, though I could have sung as others singthere was no giving thanks unto God by Jesus Christ in my heart. I wondered, as I came along, whether God might not lead to this House someone whom He would bring to Himself this morningto whom this cold day should become as memorable as that day of snow was to me!

That morning in that Methodist Chapel there was a good work done, for though there were but few of us, one at least was called, and that one God has made the spiritual parent of many thousands of His children. I am surprised to find this House so full today, it is clear proof that you love to hear the Gospel and it encourages me to hope that there may be one here whom God shall make eminently useful when He has saved him. This we shall be sure ofwhoever it may be, if he is reconciled to God by the death of Gods dear Sonhe will give thanks to God, indeed, and of a truth! If nobody else does so, he will, from this day forward, sing

*I will praise You every day   
Now Your angers turned away.   
Comfortable thoughts arise   
From the bleeding Sacrifice.*

We cannot give thanks to God through Jesus Christ unless we have accepted the Mediator! All the thanks commanded in the text are to come up to God through Jesus Christ. If we reject Him, or if we associate Him as a Mediator with somebody else, we have gone contrary to Gods way and we cannot praise God.

Virgins and saints and martyrs must never be made rivals to Jesus. To praise God, even the Father, does it not strike you that we must feel the spirit of adoption? Who could praise a person as father whom he does not recognize as father? But he who feelsYes, I am the Lords child, erring though I am, and my heart says, Abba, he can praise God, indeed! To the fullest performance of this duty there must be a subordination of ourselves to the will of God. We must not desire to have our own way. We must be content to say, Not my will, but Yours be done. I cannot give thanks to God always for all things till my old self is put down. While self rules, the hungry horseleech is in the heart and that is fatal to gratitude.

Self and discontent are mother and child. But when you say in your heart, I am perfectly resigned to the will of God, my will consents to His will, then shall your praise be as the continual sacrifice and your thanksgiving shall rise before Him as incense.

III. I only want your attention a few minutes more while I speak upon THE EMINENT EXCELLENCIES of continually giving thanks to God, even the Father. And the first excellency is, it honors God. A thankful spirit glorifies the Most High. Whoever offers praise glorifies Me, says the Lord. We might have imagined that whether we grumbled or complained it would make no difference to God. It would be of no consequence to any one of us what might be the opinion of a little community of ants about us. But God is infinitely more superior to us than we are to ants! He considers that our praising and blessing Him renders glory to His name. Let us render it to Him, then, without stint.

There is no higher commendation for any course of action or for any virtue to a Christian man than to tell him that it will honor God. Will it dishonor God? He will shrink from it though mines of gold should tempt him. Will it honor God? The Believer rushes forward to it though floods and flames lie in his way. A grateful spirit is a blessed and yet a cheap way of honoring God, for it brings to us its own return. Like mercy, it is twice blessed. It blesses us in the giving and honors God in the receiving. Let the Christian see to it that he abounds in it. Obedience to our text will tend to check us from sinGiving thanks always for all things.

Very well, then, there are some places that we must not enter, for it would be blasphemous to be giving thanks there. There are some things which I must not do, for I could not give God thanks for them. Suppose I have ground down the poorhow can I give God thanks for the miserable shillings which are the blood of these men? Suppose I have gained my living by an evil tradehow can I give thanks to God for the gold as I hear it chink in my bag? Suppose every day my prosperity brings misery to othershow can I give thanks for it? To give thanks for the fruit of sin were practically to blaspheme the thrice holy God! O, no! If the Christian is always to give thanks, he must always be where he can give thanksand if he is to give God thanks for all things, he must not touch that which he cannot give God thanks for. I must never grasp the fruit of covetousness, the gain of dishonesty, the profit of Sabbath-breaking, the result of oppressionfor if I do, I have that for which I may weep and howl before Godbut certainly not that for which I can give Him thanks.

Brothers and Sisters, I say that if we looked well to our text, it would, by the power of Gods Holy Spirit, restrain us from sin. But one of the truest excellencies of a spirit of perpetual thanksgiving is this, that it calms us when we are glad and it cheers us when we are sorrowfula double benefit! It allays the feverish heat at the same time that it mitigates the rigorous cold. If a man is rich and God has given him a thankful spirit, he cannot be too rich. If he will give thanks to God, he may be worth millions and they will never hurt him. On the other hand, if a man has learned to give thanks to God and he becomes poor, he cannot be too poorhe will be able to bear up under the severest penury. The rich man should learn to find God in all things. The poor man should learn to find all things in God and there is not much difference when you come to the bottom of these two causes!

One child of God will be as grateful and as happy, as blessed and as rejoicing as another, if he is but satisfied, still, to give God thanks. There is no overcoming a man who has climbed into this spirit. I will banish you, said a persecutor of the saints. But you cannot do that, the saint said, for I am at home everywhere where Christ is. I shall take away all your property, he said. But I have none, said the other, and if I had any you could not take away Christ from me, and as long as He is left I shall be rich. I will take away your good name, cried the persecutor. That is gone already, said the Christian, and I count it joy to be counted the offscouring of all things for Christs sake. But I will put you in prison. You may do as you please, but I shall be always free, for where Christ is there is liberty. But I shall take away your life, said he. Yes, well, said the other, then I shall be in Heaven which is the truest life, so that you cannot hurt me.

This was a brave defiance to throw down at the feet of the foe! It is not in the power of the enemy to injure the men of God when once self is dethroned and the heart has learned to be resigned to the will of God! O, you are great, you are strong, you are rich, you are mighty when you have bowed yourselves to the will of the Most High! Stoop that you may conquer! Bow that you may triumph! Yield that you may get the mastery! It is when we are nothing that we are everythingwhen we are weak that we are strong! It is when we have utterly become annihilated as to selfand God is All in Allit is then that we are filled with all the fullness of God! May the Holy Spirit conduct us into this spirit of perpetual thankfulness.

One thing I am sure of, that the more we have of this, the more useful we shall assuredly become. Nothing has had a greater effect upon the minds of thoughtless men than the continued thankfulness of true Christians. There are sick beds which have been more fruitful in conversions than pulpits. I have known women confined to their chambers by the space of 20 years whose remarkable cheerfulness of spirit has been the talk of the entire district! And many there have been who have called to see poor Sarah in her cottageknowing that she has scarcely been a single day without distressing painand have heard her voice and looked into that dear smiling face and have learned the reality of godliness. The bedridden saint has been a power throughout all the district and many have turned to God, saying, What is this which enables the Christian to give thanks, always, to God?

Beloved, our crusty tempers and sour faces will never be evangelists! They may become messengers of Satan but they will never become helpers of the Gospel. To labor to make other people happy is one of the grand things a Christian should always try to do. In little things we ought not to be forever worrying, fidgeting, finding little difficulties and spying out faults in others. I believe that to a faulty man everybody is faulty. But there are better people in the world than you have dreamed of, Sir, and when you are better you will find them out! If you were always grateful to

God, you would thank Him that people are as good as they are. If you would be thankful when you meet, even, with bad peoplethankful that they are not worse than they areand try to get hold of the best points in them and not their worst points, you would be much more likely to gain your purpose, if your purpose is to glorify God by doing them good.

If you want to catch flies, try honeythey will be more readily caught with that than with vinegarat least if they are human flies. Put into your speech, love, rather than bitterness and you will prevail. There are times when you must speak with all the sternness of an Elijah. There are proper seasons when there must be no holding back of the most terrible Truths of God. But, for all that, let the general current of your life, the natural outflow of your entire being, be a thankfulness to God which makes you loving towards men. I am sure in this way, when you come to speak of Jesus, you will get a more attentive ear. And when you tell your experience you will recommend the Gospel by your own conversation.

Beloved, I pray the Lord will give us a thankful spirit always and when we talk to each other, let it not be our habit as it is ordinarily with Englishmento complain of this and of thatbut let us thank God and testify of His goodness. I have heard that farmers are greatly given to grumbling. Well, if they are more apt at complaining than trades people are, they are very far gone in it, for generally wherever I go I hear that trade is badit always has been ever since I have been in London and commerce has been constantly going to ruin! I have known some who have lost money every month and yet are richer every year! How is this? Had not we better change our way of talking and dwell not upon our miseries but our mercies? Let us speak much of what God has given rather than of that which He has in love withheld from us. Let us bless Him rather than speak ill of our neighbors, or complain of our circumstances.

But alas, there are some to whom I speak who will never undertake this duty, till, as I have already said, they have new hearts and right spirits and have become reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Now, to you, this one wordYou are guilty and must be punished unless you find forgiveness! There is before you, this morning, an Altar of Sacrifice in the Person of Jesus Christ! There are four horns on the altar, looking either way, and whoever touches the horns of this altar shall live and live forever! Jesus Christ is the great Altar of Sacrifice, a touch of Him at this moment will save you! It is the whole Gospelbelieve, trust and live, for whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of Godwhoever trusts in Christ shall be saved!

Come to the Altar, where His blood was spilt! Come, now, and lay your hands upon its hornyou can but perish there. No, I must correct myselfyou cannot perish thereyou must perish anywhere else! Come, then, and rest in Jesus and the Lord bless you for His dear names sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 5:1-21. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #2488 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRISTS LOVE TO HIS SPOUSE   
NO. 2488

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, OCTOBER 25, 1896.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 5, 1886.

Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. Ephesians 5:25.

THE love of Jesuswhat a theme it is! The Apostle said that it passes knowledge and if it passes knowledge, much more does it excel any description that can be given of it! The heart may feel it better than the tongue may speak it. If there is one subject more than another upon which I wish always to speak, it is the love of Christ. But if there is one which quite baffles me and makes me go back from this platform utterly ashamed of my poor feeble words, and of the tongue which has uttered them, it is this subject. This love of Christ is the most amazing thing under Heaven, if not in Heaven itself. How often have I said to you that if I had heard that Christ pitied us, I could understand it. If I had heard that Christ had mercy upon us, I could comprehend it. But when it is written that he actually loves us, that is quite another and a much more extraordinary thing! Love between mortal and mortal is quite natural and comprehensible, but love between the Infinite God and us poor sinful finite creatures, though conceivable in one sense, is utterly inconceivable in another. Who can grasp such an idea? Who can fully understand it? Especially when it comes in this formHE (read it in large capitals) loved me, and gave Himself for methis is the miracle of miracles!

I feel the more embarrassed with my subject, at the very onset, because this love of Christ is here positively likened to the love of a husband to his wife, and is so likened to it as to be made the model of what the husbands love to his wife should be! Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. I should never have dared to draw the comparison, nor should any man have drawn it, but that the Holy Spirit, Himself, moved the pen of Paul to write it, and this being the case, we shall not be intruding into the secret places of the Most High if we now enter upon the consideration of this wondrous theme! Verily, I may well say, as the Apostle does in the 32nd verse, This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. It is a mystery, a subject far too deep for the mere intellect to dive into its depthsand too sacred for us to think or speak of except with utmost solemnity of heart. How shall I order my speech in the presence of such a subject as this? How shall I be free and yet be guarded? How shall I take you to the edge of this great sea of the Truth of God and even venture into it without getting, at once, over my head?

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Churcha parallel is drawn between poor mortals like ourselves who occupy the position of husbands and our glorious Lord who is God Over All, blessed forever! In boundless condescension He deigns to occupy the same kind of place in reference to His Church, which He calls His bride, He Himself, being the Bridegroom who is soon to come! Again I say that I should never have thought of such a comparison had not the Holy Spirit, Himself, put it before us and invited us to consider it.

So, dear Friends, with great reverence, let us think, first, of how Christ loves the Church. Then, secondly, how He has proved His love by giving Himself for the Church. And then, thirdly, let us make the practical enquiry, how shall we think of this wondrous love of Christ?

I. First, then, HOW DOES CHRIST LOVE HIS CHURCH? I cannot help beginning by saying that Christ loves His church specially. There would be no parallel whatever between the husbands love to the wife and Christs love to the Church if there were not a specialty about it. Christ is Love itselfHe is full of kindness and benevolence. In that sense, He loves all mankind, but that cannot be the meaning of the text, for it would be a very strange kind of exhortation to the husband if that were the case. No, the husbands love to his spouse is something special and particularand it stands quite alone and all by itself. He will be kind and benevolent and generous towards all others, but that love which he lavishes upon his wife he must give to nobody else in the world. It is certainly so with our blessed Lord. Free and rich and overflowing in loving kindness, yet He made a special choice of His people before the earth was. And having chosen because of His love, He loves because of His choice, and that love is a peculiar, special, remarkable, pre-eminent love such as He bestows upon no one else of all the human race! It must be so, or else the passage would be all but immoral! Certainly it would be manifestly incorrect.   
There is, then, a special love which Christ has towards His own Church, towards all Believers, towards His chosen people, towards those whom His Father gave Him, of whom He says, They are Mine. I may invite each of you who are included in either of these descriptions to drink in the sweetness of that gracious text, I have loved you with an everlasting love. That means, I have loved you with a special and peculiar and distinguishing love. As many of us as believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are distinguished by the enjoyment of a love which is all our own! Dear fellow Christians, let us never forget this amazing love and, as Christ loves us so specially, let us feel that we are bound to love Him specially. Let us give to Him all our hearts selection, for He is a jealous Savior and He will have all our love. So let us render it to Him, not of compulsion, but with a joyous willingness! Love dies in the presence of compulsionit will wear no chains except its own silken fetters. But it flies, oh, how swiftly, on its own strong wings when once it perceives its beloved objective. Christ loves His church, then, specially, as good John Kent sings *He loved the world of His elect,   
With love surpassing thought.   
Nor will His mercy ever neglect   
The souls so dearly bought.*   
And, next, I ask you to notice what is not always the case with regard to the husband and the wife, that the Lord Jesus loves His church unselfishly. That is to say, He never loved her for what she has, but what she is. No, I must go further than that and say that He loved her, not so much for what she is, but what He makes her as the object of His love. He loves her not for what comes to Him from her, or with her, but for what He is able to bestow upon her! His is the strongest love that ever was, for He has loved unseemliness till He has changed it into beauty! He has loved the sinner till He has made him a saint. He has loved the foul and filthy till He has washed them with water by the Word of God and presented them to Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. We love because of loveliness apprehended and perceived, but Christ loved because He would impart His own loveliness to the object of His choice. Even the best of men, doubtless, love in some measure from selfish motives. There is some mixture of self-interest in all human love, but Christ had nothing to gain by loving His Church. He was very God of very God, the adored of angels and the Beloved of the Father, yet He fixed the eyes of His lovemark you, not of His

pity, merely, but of His loveupon those whom He had chosen out of the race of men! He loved them, not for anything that He could ever gain from them, for He had all things in Himself, but because of what He would impart to them! They had nothing of good in themselves and were only fit to be loved by Christ because, like empty vessels, their very emptiness fits them to be receivers of His fullness. In no other sense are we ever fit to be loved by Christ. As the sun chased the darkness away from the world and still prevents it from going back into the darkness, so did Christ love a poor, fallen, darkened company of mortals, and loved them into light, and love, and joy, and still loves and enlightens them and keeps them where they are. Oh, what a wondrous love is this! Let our souls rejoice and be glad therein.   
Further, Brothers and Sisters, as Christs love to His Church is a love of choice, and of specialty, and of marvelous unselfishness, so I believe although I do not understand how it can be sothat it is a love of complacency. The husbands love to his wife is not the love of a parent to a child. It is not the love of the philanthropist to the object of distress that he relieves. It is something very different from either of these forms of love. It may be that the husband confers benefits upon his wife as the result of his love, and he should do so. But still, the love of the husband to the wife puts them somehow on a level with one another. She has complacency in him and he has complacent delight in her. If a husband only loved his wife with a feeling of pity towards her, with the notion of relieving her, and so forth, that would be a very poor kind of relationship!   
And though I speak with bated breath as I say it, I believe that the blessed Lord Christ takes complacency in His people. That we should delight ourselves in Him, is very easy to understand, but that He should delight Himself in us, oh, the very thought of it is ravishing to my heart! Even in the Old Testament Scripture, our Lord said to His chosen, You shall be called Hephzibah, that is, My delight is in her. Is it really so, that the infinite God takes delight in His chosen people? Here is another passage to confirm itMy delights were with the sons of men. Does Jesus find delight in men? Yes, that He does, and you know how He said to those who were the representatives of His church in His lifetime on earth, I have called you friends, and He did seem to find a solace in their company. Even when He had risen from the dead and had no more work to do for their redemption, yet He came to them that He might enjoy their society. Poor, fallible, half-instructed men they were, yet He found His pleasure in them! He used to speak of them in this way, I will declare your name to My brethren. He is not ashamed to call us brethren and in that rapturous Song of Songs, which is the very Holy of Holies of our blessed Bible, He does not hesitate to speak of His beloved as His spouse and to use to her all those endearing terms which prove that He takes great delight in her.   
Think of it, my Soul, that Jesus takes great delight in you! He became a Man and it was not good even for such a Man to be alone. He could not rest till He had found you out and had wooed and won you! Will you ever deny Him your company? Will you refuse Him your heart of hearts? Will you hide from Him the secret of your soul? If so, you do a grievous wrong to Him who has deigned to stoop from the Throne of His eternal Glory to take delight in the company of His creature, man! I have looked abroad upon creation and have seen all kinds of beautiful birds and intelligent beasts, yet have I never seen any towards which I would stoop to make them my intimate acquaintancesand marry them in the heart of my love! No, we would not stoop even that little distance! But we were infinitely below the Son of God, yet has He chosen us! He felt that He could link His destiny with oursI put it not too strongly, for that is what He has really done! He has become the Head of His body, the Church. He has become the Husband of His chosen bride. He has, as it were, entered into the same boat with His people. He has made a household whereof we two are the companion partsHe the Husband and His Church the spouse. Oh, who shall tell it all out? I do but touch the surface of this boundless sea as with a swallows winghappy are you if you dare to plunge into its depths.   
There is, then, between Christ and His Church, to make a parallel between the love of the husband to his wife, a love of complacency.   
And being a love of complacency, in such a case as this, there is an intense love of sympathy. The true husband and wife are so united that they share each others joys and sorrows without making any effort to do so. It comes naturally to them, they cannot avoid it. And oh, let us tell out this great Truth of Godthe sympathy between Christ and His people is absolutely perfect! If He sees us in sorrow, He feels it in His heart. He was Himself encompassed with infirmity, when He was here, and tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know all the trials of the Church He loved. And now in Heaven, as He has shared our sorrows, He decrees that we shall share His joys! He wishes us, even now, to let our hearts beat in sympathy with His triumph and His victory. I wish we would do so, why should we not? Our Husband is on the Thronethen let us begin to reign with Him! He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenliesthen let us have faith enough to claim what is really ours in Him! Remember that quaint couplet of which good old Rowland Hill was so fond, and sing it yourself   
*But this I do find, we two are so joined,   
Hell not be in Glory and leave me behind.* Still better, remember that Word of Power which fell from our Lords blessed lips while here below, Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory. He has a perfect sympathy with us and we should have a like sympathy with Him. Blessed be His dear name that He should ever have entered into such bonds of love as those with such poor creatures as we are!   
Nor is that all. While it is very blessed to know that Christ has this love of sympathy, He has, further, a love of communion. Without this, there could be no parallel with domestic life which includes much of happy communion and loving conversation. A brother minister said to me, the other day, when we were talking to one another about what the Gospel has done for men, Did you ever think what a wonderful thing the Gospel is, that it has made possible such happiness as you and I enjoy in our domestic relationships? And of course I heartily responded to that remark, for if there is anything that is a miniature picture of Heaven upon earth, it is a pair of Christians happily united, whose children grow up in the fear of the Lord and render to them increased comfort and joy every day! Oh, how much some of us owe to the Gospel for the happiness of our homes! There could, however, be no such happiness in married life if there were no conversation, no communionand our Lord Jesus Christ so loves His Church that He often converses with her. He so loves each one of His people that if we are only willing to have it so, we may walk with Him, we may talk with Him and He will speak with us as a man speaks with his friend. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, if you do not, every day, commune with Christ, whose fault is it? Not His, but yours, for He loves you so that He would never let you be away from Him if you were not so wayward, and so easily turned aside by little things. Yes, He manifests Himself to us as He does not to the world. I am not going to tell out, here, all that He saysall the ways in which He manifests Himself to His people, we could not tell. But there are times of such real delight in fellowship with the Lord Jesus that we can only say with Dr. Watts *My willing soul would stay   
In such a frame as this,   
And sit and sing herself away   
To everlasting bliss.*   
The pith of all that I have saidand I have much more to say than time will permitis thisit is an extraordinarily thing that Christ has entered into positive unity with His people. Unity, mark you for that is the essence of the marriage bond. We are one with Christ, who made Himself one with His people. Have you ever realized this, even you who are the best-tutored of the children of God? Have you ever taken a firm hold of this great Truth of God and gripped it so that you will not let it go? Come back to what I said a little while ago, that Christ has linked His destiny with yours, His honor with yours, His life with yours, His happiness with yours! You must be in Heaven, or else He will be bereaved! You must be in Heaven, or else He will be imperfect! You are a member of His body and if He should lose one of His members, then His body would not be perfect, nor the Head either! You are joined to the Lord and you are one spirit with Him, and you may bravely say, Who shall separate us? for such is this eternal union that there is no separation between Christ and the soul that is joined to Him.   
The Lord, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away. In the olden times, the husband might give his wife a letter of divorce and put her away. But God says that He hates putting away and He will never divorce those who are joined to Him. What a marriage this is! Do you know, dear Friend, what I am talking about? I cannot speak of it as I would, but it is true, and that is the wonder of it! It is no fiction, no myth, no mere figure of speech, but it is really so in deed and in truth. For this cause Christ left His Father and became one with His Church, that henceforth they should no more be two, but one. And now we who have believed in Christ Jesus are one with Him in time and to eternity! His love has made it so and we may paraphrase the words we read, just now, and say, Behold, what manner of love the Bridegroom has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the spouse of Christ!

I have but very imperfectly spoken upon this part of my subject, but I must not linger longer on this most delightful theme.   
II. I now ask you briefly to notice HOW THE LORD JESUS PROVED HIS LOVE TO HIS CHURCHChrist also loved the Church and gave Himself for it.   
I will not at first restrict the meaning of this text to what is the real essence of it, but I will just observe that Christ gave Himself for His church when He was born into the world, when He did not disdain the virgins womb, but was born of Mary, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger. The angels have never ceased to wonder at this great mystery of godliness! The God who made the heavens and the earth, the God who upholds all things by the word of His power, lay as an Infant in the manger of Bethlehem because there could be no manifestation of His love to His people unless it could be said that they two were one flesh! So He became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, most surely and truly Man, with all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and liable even to death in order to be fully one with us. Oh, how really He gave Himself for us when He thus became a Babe, a Child, a Man!   
That being done, He gave all His life here on earth for us. He did nothing for Himselfit was all for us, for His Church. His whole life was for her righteousness, for her example, for her teaching and for her quickening. He loved her with no view but the Glory of the Father by the salvation of His chosen.   
Nor was that all. It was, indeed, but the beginning! Having given His Godhead by the assumption of our humanity, having given His life by spending it all for us, Christ gave Himself up to death for our sins. He went up to the felons gallowsthe Cross of Calvaryand there He gave His hands and feet to the nails, and His heart to the spear. Laying down His body for us, but at the same time laying down His soul and spirit, He suffered that dread doom of being forsaken of His God, so that He cried, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? There, when you see His pale body, like a withered lily broken at the stalkwhen you see the holy men and women wrapping Him in spices and laying Him in Josephs tombyou understand how He loved us and gave Himself for us, dying in our place, a Propitiation and Atonement for our sins! He loved us so as to die for us! He could not have died had He not become Man, but being found in fashion as a Man, and partaking of our human nature, it was possible for Him to prove the utmost extent of His love by laying down His life for us. Oh, could you not kiss those dear cold feet? Do you not half wish that you could have been there to wrap Him in the spices and fine linen and to lay Him in the grave? But remember that He now lives! Our heavenly Lover lives! He has proved His love by giving up His life, but now He has His life back and He has gone Home to His FatherHe has gone back to the royalties He left and put on, again, all the splendor which for a while He laid aside.   
Yet He does not love us any the less, for He still gives Himself for us. He acts the part of Intercessor for His Church. For Zions sake He does not hold His peace. And for Jerusalems sake He does not rest. Nor will HeHe is crowned that His Church may be crowned. He is enthroned that she, too, may come to the Throne and He will further prove His love, by-and-by, for He has so given Himself for us that He is bound to come againto fetch Home His affianced when she is prepared for Him and Heaven above is prepared for her! Then shall He come in all His Glory and she shall be brought to Him in raiment of needlework, in all the splendor of His righteousness and forever and ever shall there be nothing but joy and blessedness!   
What I am driving at, and what I want every Christian here to get at, is this thought. Whatever Jesus Christ isand you do not know half of what He is, even you who know most of Himwhatever Christ is in any relationship, or from any point of view, He has given Himself to us! Not merely has He given His thoughts, His actions, His wisdom, His power and His wealth but He has given Himself to us. Oh, I like to think of this! All that I can imagine Christ to be must still fall far short of Himself! It is Himself that we love and I would sooner have Christ than have Heaven! It is Himself we love and I would sooner have Christ than His crown! It is Himself we love and I would sooner have Christ than all the golden streets! It is Himself that we love and it is Himself that belongs to us not merely the sight of His eyes, but His eyes themselves! Not only the love of His heart, but His heart itself! Himself, His Godhead and His Manhood, the complex Person of the Christ of God is given to His Church!   
I feel as if I do not know how to talk at all about this great Truth of God. Some Brother cried out this morning when I was speaking, and I noticed that somebody else immediately followed him. But oh, if ever there is a time for crying outand yet, on the other hand, if ever there is a time for being struck with silenceit is when we get on this topic of Christs love to His people! I feel as if I need to run from this platform and go homeand shut the door and sit downand weep to the praise of this mighty love! And then I should want to get up and run back, again, and say, What a fool I was not to tell you all I could about it! May God the Holy Spirit help you to realize it! That you are loved by anyone is a joy, for love is a precious thing, whoever gives it. But you, Believer, are loved by Christ! You are so loved by Christ as not merely to be espoused to Him, but united to Him in eternal wedlock! You are joined to Him in such a way that you must, by-and-by, be with Him in all the Glory of His royal estate, for the King will bring His queen home and He will bring you home to dwell with Him forever and ever! I am very sorry for those who do not know anything about this great love! I am truly sorry for you outsiders   
*His worth, if all the nations knew,   
Surely the whole world would love Him too!* If they did but imagine the sweetness of the love of Christ, they would never give rest to their eyes until they had looked to Him by faith and so had learned it, and known it for themselves!   
III. Now, lastly, dear Friends, if such is the love of Jesus, and the way in which He has proved it, HOW OUGHT WE TO THINK OF IT? I hardly need suggest to Gods people anything about this, for you know it already, your own hearts have outrun my words.   
How should we think of the love of Christ? Why, with deepest gratitude. Oh, how could You love me, my Lord, You whose eyes outshine the light of the morning? How could You love me, You who can make the fairest of all things with a wish of Your heart? How could You love me in whom there was nothing fair, nothing worthy of Your love? Yet I do bless You for it. Do not all of you who love Him say in your hearts, Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, that ever He should love me? It is not His benefits that you have to think of just now, though they are innumerable. It is not His mercies that you have to think of at this moment, though they are immeasurable. But it is that He has loved you and that He still loves you, and that He has given Himself to you and for you! That is the point. Do you not bless Him? Do you not feel as if you could lie at His feet, ah, and love the very dust He trod upon, when you think that ever He should love you? Very well, then, return to Him your gratitude.   
But that is not half enough. The next thing is, render to Him your obedience. Does not the Scripture say that the wife is to be obedient to her husband? Well, in this case, shall we not prove our gratitude to Christ by a complete obedience to Him? Is there anything that He commands you to do? Can you neglect it after such love as this? The least of His ordinances, will you not observe them? The smallest of His precepts, will you not regard them? Is there a word of His lips that you dare despise? Is there a wish that He has expressed in the Scriptures that you would fail to carry out? I hope not! Such love as Christ has given to us ought to receive from us, without any exhortation, a complete and perfect obedience even to every jot and tittle as far as we can render it. I do not understand that love to Christ which makes men pick and choose and say, I shall not attend to that, for that is non-essential. I shall do thisI believe that it is wrong, but still, I daresay it does not matter much. No, no, no! True wives act not so to their husbands! There is no wish of a loving husband which a loving wife would not regard. No, moreshe anticipates his wishes, she delights to make him happyand so should it be with my heart towards my Lord. I should be looking out for what I can do for Him. I should be hunting high and low to find something that would give Him pleasure and, above all, since He says, If you love Me, keep My commandments, my heart should answer, Your commandments are not grievous. It is my delight to do Your will, O my God and my Savior. That is the spirit in which to act towards Christ.   
Once more. There is a text which says, Let the wife see that she reverence her husband. I have sometimes thought that must be somewhat difficult for some wives to do. There has not been very much to reverence in their husbands. Still, they are bound to do it as far as it is possible. In this case, there is everything to reverence in our Beloved! There is nothing about Him but deserves our most profound homage. Such an One as He, whose very name has music in it, whose very Person is the delight of seraphim and cherubimHe, the Christ whom none can conceive of in all His fullness but the Fatherwe must reverence Him and bow before Him and extol Him!   
I grow angry, I confess it, when I hear some men speak of Christ. They talk of my Lord in these days as if He were some common person and they have comparative religions in which they compare Him with I know not whom! I love my Lord so well that I must boil over with indignation when His name is disparaged. Our hymn says

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus.*   
It is almost too commonplace an expression in reference to Him! Still, what it means let us do. Let us be ready, like the armed men who were about the bed of Solomon, to defend our King against all comers, for, if He loved us so much, we must love Him in return.   
And what else shall we say? If such is the love of Christ, how shall we think of it but in a way of holiness? Let us seek to be like He is. Let us try to fulfill His will that He may purify us and sanctify us by the washing of water by the Word, that we may be holy as He who has called us is holy. Let us think of this love by striving after sanctification and let us think of this love, above all, by rendering to Him, now, and as long as we live, the full love of our heart. We cannot love Him without being moved to love Him more. We can love the more by thinking much of the Person towards whom our hearts are drawn, so think much of my Lord, think of Him every day! Get to be familiar with Him. Read frequently the story of His life and death. Get alone as often as you can and picture Him before your eyes until you find your heart exclaiming, I love You, dearest Lord. You know all things. You know that I love You. I find it a profitable form of devotion, sometimes, to sit quite still and not say a word, but just think of Him. My heart has burned within me while doing that and I believe that it is not lost or wasted time, but time most profitably spent, for I come forth from my chamber and feel, Now I am ready for the service of lifeor for its sufferingfor I have seen the Well-Beloved and the glances of His countenance have charmed away my grief and prepared me to take up my cross and follow Him wherever He goes. Oh, love the Lord, you His saints and, as long as you live, love Him more and more, love Him to the very utmost, till you die of love! Blessed, forever blessed be His holy name! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**1 JOHN 3.**

I have read this chapter many times in your hearing, but we cannot read it too often, for it is full of the deepest and most important instruction. God grant that fresh light from above may shine upon it as we listen once more to the familiar words!

Verse 1. BeholdIf you never used your eyes to good purpose before, use them so now!   
1. What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Let the truth of our adoption amaze usthe adoption of such unworthy ones as we were to so high a relationshipthat we should be called the sons of God.   
1. Therefore the world us knows not, because it knew Him not. There is no need to say to whom this last sentence refers. The pronoun, Him, is quite sufficient to indicate our Lord Jesus whom the world knew not. Every living, loving heart must at once have thought of, Him, who is the chief, the First-Born, the only-begotten Son of God!   
2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.It is enough to make the lame man leap as a hart to hear that blessed statement and to know it to be true!   
2. And it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is. In proportion to our view of Christ is our likeness to Him. Those who never saw Him are not like He is at all. Those who have, in a measure, seen Him, are in a measure like He is, they who see Him as He is are like He is. There is a transforming power about the image of Christ when it is seen by the soulWe shall be like He; for we shall see Him as He is.   
3. And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure. Discouragement and despair will not purify you. Doubt and darkness will only make you worse than you were before. But the indulgence of this blessed hope that you are to be like Christ will help you to purify yourself, even as He is pure. Therefore, Beloved, have hope in God! Remember that it is one of Satans tricks and snares to try to discourage you, but it is Gods will to increase your hope, for thereby you increase in purity.   
4. Whoever commits sin, transgresses, also, the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law. This is the best definition of sin that can be givenlet none of us ever tolerate any other idea of sin but that it is the transgression of the Law of God.

5, 6. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whoever abides in Him sins not: whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. That is to say, if sin is the habitual course of our life, we do not truly know the Lord. He who walks with God endeavors with all his might to be free from sin and he is sanctified by abiding in Christ.

7. Little children, let no man deceive you. Because you are little, you are apt to be deceived. There is a great blessedness in being little children, but there is also some danger connected with such a condition, so we must beware of those who would deceive us.

7. He that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The test of a mans real character must be what he does, not what he professes! Not what he boasts of, but what is really the manner of his life.

8, 9. He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. He sins not with any pleasure, it is not the course of his life. There are, alas, in the best of men, infirmities and imperfections and failures! Would God these were all removed! Still, the man is not what he used to be, Though he is not what he shall be, he is not what he once was.

10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. Holiness and love are the marks of the true child of God. And where these are not to be found, a man must not bolster himself up with any notion that salvation is his, for he is no child of God.

11, 12. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that Wicked One, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous. So that, when you see a man filled with hate and envy and malice, it is because his own life is not holy. There is no exception to this ruletrue holiness and love always go togetherwhere love is absent, holiness must be absent, too.

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. See, Cain hated Abel and the world hates the saints. It is the very nature and spirit of the world to hate those who are not of the world.

14. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. Love becomes the distinguishing mark of the new life.   
14. He that loves not his brother abides in death. No matter though he may be outwardly religious, and may think that by doing certain external actions he will save himself, there is no truth at all in his religion, for the very essence of true religion is that a man lives not to himself, but to God and for the good of his fellow men.   
15. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. He would get rid of that brother if he could and he is, therefore, a murderer in spirit, for the essence of murder is not the dagger or the poison, but the desire to put out of existence or to do the utmost harm to the one who is hated. The essential element of murder lurks within the bosom of all hatred.

15. And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. His action is Cain-like. He is not of the chosen seed. He has not the life of God abiding in him.

16. Hereby perceive we the love of God.The master love, the chief love that was ever in this world   
16-19. Because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this worlds good, and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. That is still the testtruthful love proves that we are of the truth. Children of the God of Truth and so assures and tranquillizes our hearts before Him. Our hearts shall be calm, confident and happy before God when we know that true love flows within them.   
20-23. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. Faith works by love. We believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, Gods well-beloved and only-begotten Son and that faith leads us to love all who bear His holy name.   
24. And He that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. If He has given us the Spirit of Christ, then Christ Himself is in us! If He has given us the Spirit of love, that also is the evidence that Christ, Himself, abides in us. Oh, for more of that blessed Spirit in every one of us!

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Sermon #628 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A GLORIOUS CHURCH

NO. 628

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 7, 1835 BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should**

**be holy and without blemish.   
Ephesians 5:25-27.**

WHAT a golden example Christ gives to His disciples! There are few masters who could venture to say, If YOU would practice my teaching, imitate my life. But the life of Jesus is the exact transcript of perfect virtue and therefore He can point to Himself as the paragon of holiness, as well as the teacher of it. The Christian should take nothing short of Christ for his model. Under no circumstances ought we to be content unless we reflect the Grace which was in Christ Jesus. Even as a husband, which is a relationship that the Christian sustains in common with the rest of men, he is to look upon Christ Jesus as being set before him as the picture and he is to paint according to that copy.

Christ himself being the Bridegroom of the Church, the true Christian is to seek to be such a husband as Christ was to His spouse. I fear, Brethren, that we often stop short of the Masters examplewe compare ourselves among ourselves and are therefore far from being wise. We think if we avoid the egregious faults of some and can attain to the moderate virtues of others, we have done well. Let it be so no longer. He would never excel in statuary who should take the works of some mere amateur to be his copy.

No. The sculptor knows that he cannot rival Praxiteles or Phidias and yet he takes some Greek torso or bust from the antique to be his model he must have perfection thereeven if there is none in his own workmanship. The painter would never attain to eminence if he went to an exhibition and devoted himself to the study of some work of moderate worth and said, I will attempt to reach this and there I will stop contented. No. He goes to the galleries of the great masters and though his timid pencil may not dare to hope that he shall strike out thoughts so clearly and make life stand out upon the canvas as they have done, yet he seeks to drink in their inspiration, hoping that he may rise to some proud eminence in art by imitating them.

Let the Christian, then, aspire to be like his Lord who is the Author and Finisher of his faith. And let him, as he runs the heavenly race, look to Jesus and make the Apostle and High Priest of his profession his continual study and aim to be changed into His image from glory unto glory. You must be struck, in reading the passage before us, on what high ground the Apostle takes the Christian. It is possible that some husbands might say, How can I love such a wife as I have? It might be a supposable case that some Christian was unequally yoked together with an unbeliever and found himself forever bound with a fetter to one possessed of a morose disposition, or a obstinate temper, or a bitter spirit.

He might therefore say, Surely I am excused from loving in such a case as this! It cannot be expected that I should love that which is in itself so unlovely. But mark, Beloved, the wisdom of the Apostle. He silences that excuse, which may possibly have occurred to his mind while writing the passage, by taking the example of the Savior, who loved, not because there was loveliness in His Church, but in order to make her lovely.

You perceive He loved His Church and gave Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. He did not admire her because there was no spot in her. He did not choose her because she had no wrinkles. He fixed His affections where there were multitudinous spots and wrinkleswhere everything was deformity. He still set His heart and would not withdraw till He had loved the spots away and loved every wrinkle out of her who was the object of His choice. And now He seems to say to every Christian man, however unhappily he may have fared:

If perhaps, in the lot of Providence, you have been yoked to one who deserves but little of your affection, yet if you cannot love because of esteem, love because of pity. If you cannot love because of present merit, then love because of future hope, for possibly, even there, in that bad soil, some sweet flower may grow. Be not weary of holy tillage and of heavenly plowing and sowing, because at the last there may spring up some fair harvest that shall make your soul glad. He loved His Church and gave Himself for her that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church.

I do not intend, however, this morning, to enter into the duty of husbands. That is not the reason for which I selected the text, but to set forth the love of Jesus towards His people. And first, let us consider the object of the Saviors love. He loved the Church. Then let us observe the work which love has carried on in pursuance of its gracious design. He gave himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her through the washing of water by the Word. Then, thirdly, let us look at the beloved object when the design is accomplishedwithout spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And then let us pause awhile to behold this beloved object presented by our Lord to Himself in the day of His triumphant espousals.

I. First, then, may the Spirit of God help us while we look at THE CHOSEN CHURCH, THE OBJECT OF THE SAVIORS LOVE. Some of our Brethren are very fond of what is called the general or universal view of Gods benevolence. I trust we are not afraid to deal with that whenever we come across it in Holy Scripture. We believe, God is good to all and that His tender mercies are over all His works. We believe Him to have the love of benevolence towards all His creatures and we can preach without bated breath upon such a text as thisHe is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But some of these Brethren are very much afraid of the peculiar and special sign of the Saviors love and they seem to shrink from a text which has anything particular and discriminating in it. They shake it off from their hand into the fire as Paul did the viper of old. Now we thank God we have learned to love the distinguishing Doctrines of Grace, and that predestination and discrimination are not hard words for us to pronounce and neither do they grate upon our ears! But we love to read this text and put the emphasis upon the accusative case. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

We perceive that Christ did not love the world in the sense in which the term loved is here meant. We see here that Christ gave Himself not for the world, but for her, that is the Church. In the sense in which He is said here to give Himself, He did so for none except His chosen people, the ChurchHis one, special, and particular object of affection. It is not thus that Christ has loved universal creatureshipand all mankind alike without exception or differencebut He loved the Church and gave Himself for her.

Now what is this Church which Jesus Christ loved if it is not the entire company of the elect? As many as the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world, whose names were written in the Lambs Book of Life before the stars began to shine. As many as were taken by Him to be the sheep of His pasture, the jewels of His crown, the children of His love, the subjects of His kingdom, the members of His bodyeach one of them being particularly known to Him and chosen in Him before the mountains lifted their heads into the cloudsso many compose the Church of Christ which was the object of His redeeming love.

We have to search for these chosen ones in what is called the Church visible. We know that they are not all Israel who are of Israel and that the visible Church is not identical with that Church which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself. There is a Church invisible and this is the center and life of the Church visible! What the wheat is to the chaff and heap upon the threshing floor, such are these living Christians among the mass of professors in the world. There is a distinction which we cannot see which it is not for us to try and make manifestlest, in endeavoring to root up the tares, we root up the wheat also. There is an unseen Church which becomes visible in Heaven, which will be apparent and manifest at the coming of the Son of Man. This it is which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself.

Now observe what this Church was by nature, for that is the subject of our discourse just now upon this first head. The Church which Christ loved was in her origin as sinful as the rest of the human race. Have the damned in Hell fallen through Adams transgression? So, once, had the saved in Glory. The sin which was imputed to lost spirits was equally and with as fatal consequences imputed to themand had it not been for the incoming of the Covenant Head, the second Adamthey had forever suffered with the rest. They, too, were alike depraved in nature.

Is the heart deceitful above all things in the unregenerate? So it is in the elect before regeneration. Was the will perverse? Was the understanding darkened? Was the whole head sick and the whole heart faint in the case of those who continued in sin? It was just the same, at first, with those who have been, by Sovereign Grace, taken into the heart of Christ. We were, says the Apostle, by nature the children of wrath even as others. Remember that between the brightest saint in Heaven and the

blackest sinner in Hell there is no difference except that which Christ has made! Had those glorified ones been left to continue in their natural state they would have sinned as foully and as constantly as the worst of sinners have done.

To begin with, there is no difference between the election and the nonelection. They are all alike fallen. They are all gone out of the waythey are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no, not one. No, more! This Church of Christ is made up of persons who are actually defiled by their own transgressions. Are you and I members of that Church? Ah, then we are compelled to confess that in us by nature dwelt all manner of concupiscence, vileness, and an evil heart of unbelief ever prone to depart from the living God and to rebel against the Most High. And what have we done since? Or rather, what have we

not done?

*We wandered each a different way,   
But all the downward road.*

We did not all fall into the same vices, but still when the black catalog of sin is read, we have to weep over it and to say, Such were some of us. And why we should be made a part of Christs Church is a question that never can be answered except with this one reply, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. Do the wicked sink to Hell with their sins like millstones about their necks? We would have sunk there, too, and as rapidly and as fatally, unless Eternal Love had said, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. Look at Christs Church as you see her visibly in the world and I ask you, Brothers and Sisters, though she has much about her that is admirable, whether there is not much that might cause her Lord to cast her away?

Even in her regenerate state she speaks truly when she says, she is black as the tents of Kedar. Mark the hypocrites that come into the Christian Church and that mar her purity. Observe the formalists that crowd her courtsthat sit as Gods people sit, and sing as Gods people singbut have hearts full of rottenness and villainy! Observe even the true saintshow unbelieving, how often carnally-minded, how childish how ready to murmur against God! How few of them are fathers in Israel. When they ought to be teachers they have need to be instructed in the first elements of the faith.

What heresies come into the Church and how many unstable minds are carried away with them. What divisions there are! How one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, and a third, I am of Christ. What envy there is, what backbiting of those that are eminent for usefulness. What suspicions against those who are a little more zealous than their fellows! My Brethren, what a need of affection we can see in the Church of Christ! How little brotherly kindness, how little sympathy!

On the other hand, how much of pride is discoveredhow much caste creeps in and prevails even among those who profess to be Brethren! How we find some claiming to be lords in Gods heritage and taking to themselves names and titles to which they have no right, seeing that, One is our Master, and we are not to be called, Rabbi, among men. When I look at the Church even with a blinded eye, having no power to see her as Gods Omniscient eye must see, yet is she covered with spots! Well may she wear her veil and say, Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me.

O Church of God, how is it that Jesus Christ could love you? Even in your Church capacity and Church estate, there is so much that could make Him say, You are reprobate silver. You shall be cast into the fire. Lo, how much there is that must make Him say of you, Salt is good, but this salt has lost its savor and how shall it be seasoned? It is therefore good for nothing but to be trod under foot of men. And yet you see, dear Friends, it is written that Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for her.

I think I see ita piece of ground untilledneither hedged, nor walled, nor covered with vines, nor redolent with the perfume of sweet flowers. It is a spot in the wilderness filled with thorns and thistles. Her hedges are broken down. The stones of her walls are scattered. The wild boar out of the wood wastes her. All kinds of unclean creatures lurk among her weeds and brambles. Oh, how is it, Lord of Glory, that You could buy, at the price of Your hearts blood, such a waste piece of ground as that? What could You see in that garden that You should determine to make it the fairest spot of all the earth and that it should yield You the richest of all fruit?

I think, again, I see the Church of Godnot as a fair maid decorated for her marriage day with jewels and carrying herself right gloriously both in her person and her apparel. But I see her as a helpless child, neglected by her parents, cast out, unwashed, unclothed, left uncared for and covered with her filth and blood. No eyes pity her. No arms come to bring her salvation. But the eyes of the Lord Jesus looks upon that infant and straightway love beams forth from those eyes and speak from those lips and act through those hands. He says, Live! And the helpless infant is cared forshe is nurturedshe is decked with dainty apparel. She is fed and clothed, and sustained and made lovely through the loveliness of Him who chose Her. Thus it is that strong love moved the Grace of God and the Church found that Christ gave Himself for her.

I must not, however, leave this point without reminding you of what kind of love it is which Jesus Christ gives to His Churchyou perceive it is the love of a husband. Now the love of a husband is special. Those gentlemen who think that Christ did not love the Church more than He loved the rest of the world must have a very strange idea of how a husband ought to love his wife, for it says, Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church. And surely a husband ought to love his wife more than he loves other people! Therefore Christ cherishes for the Church a special, particular affection which is set upon her rather than upon the rest of mankind.

The Lord has set His Church as much above the rest of the world as He has fixed His own Throne above the kings and princes of this lower earth. And the day shall come when she, fair as the moon and clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners, shall be recognized as being the favorite of Heaven, the peculiar treasure of ChristHis regalia, the crown of His head, the bracelet of His arm, the breastplate of His heartthe very center and core of His own love. Let us not quibble at this Truth of God for it is exceedingly precious. Let us seek the honey out of it and believe that

Christ loves the Church with a special love.

Again, a husband loves his wife with a constant love and so does Christ His Church. He will not cast her away tomorrow having loved her today. He does not vary in His affection. He may change in His display of affection, but the affection itself is still the same. A husband loves his wife with an enduring love. It will never die outhe says, Till death us do part will I cherish you. But Christ will not even let death part His love to His people. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A husband loves his wife with a hearty love, with a love that is true and intense. It is not mere lip service. He does not merely speak, but he acts! He is ready to provide for her needs. He will defend her character. He will vindicate her honor because his heart is set upon her. It is not merely with the eyes that he delights, now and then, to glance upon her, but his soul has her continually in his remembrance. She has a mansion in his heart from where she can never be cast away. She has become a portion of himselfshe is a member of his bodyshe is part of his flesh and of his bones. And so is the Church to Christ forever an eternal spouse. He

says *Forget you, I will not,   
I cannot! Your name   
Engraved on My heart does forever remain. The palms of My hands while   
I look on, I see   
The wounds I received when suffering for you.*

Now let us leave this point, only reminding you, again, that this Church is only the Church of Christ because He has made her so. She had no right or title to His affection. He loved her because He chose to do so and having once loved her, He never will divorce hershe shall be His world without end.

II. And now I shall want your patience a few minutes on the second point, and that is THE WORK WHICH LOVE SEEKS TO ACCOMPLISH IN ITS GRACIOUS DESIGNS. Since the Church is not fit for Christ by nature, He resolved to make her so by Divine Grace. He could not be in communion with sin. Therefore it must be purged away. Perfect holiness was absolutely necessary in one who was to be the bride of Christ. He purposes to work that in her and to make her qualified to be His spouse eternally.

The great means by which He attempts to do this, is, He gave Himself for her. Beloved, I wish I had the power of speech this morning as one sometimes has it, or rather, I wish that another had to handle such a weighty theme as thisfor how can I set forth to you the preciousness of this gift? He gave Himself for His Church! Had He given His crown and royalty and come down to earth for awhile, that were mercy! Had He given up, for a time, the happiness and pleasure of His Fathers house, this were somethingand this He did. But it was not enough. He would not merely leave His Glory and part with His crownHe must give Himself!

Here He is on earth, born of the Virgin. A helpless Infant. He slumbers at her breast. Throughout His life foxes had holes and birds of the air nests, but, He had not where to lay His head. He has given you much in this. He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. The crown of thorns is on His brow! The lash of the scourge is on His back! The spear is at His chest! The nails are in His hands and feet. He has given you much, but now He is about to give you all He has.

He is stripped naked to His shame. He gives His last garment that He may cover the nakedness of man, but when He cries, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me! When having drank the last drop of the bitter cup of woe, He bows His head and says, It is finished! And He gives up the ghostHe has given you all that He can givefor He has given you Himself. He gives you His Godhead that comes on earth, but is veiled in clay. He gives you His entire Manhood, for His body is given to the scourge and tomband His soul to agony and deathHe gives Himself.

Perhaps you will say, But how does His giving Himself tend to cleanse His Church? You know, Beloved, how the precious blood of His heart takes away sin. How the righteousness of His life covers His Church and makes her beautiful in the sight of God. You know how the water which flowed with the blood purifies and sanctifies His people. But, perhaps you will never realize better how Christ gives Himself to you than you do at the sacramental table. There in type and symbol you see in that bread His broken body. You see set forth in shadow in that wine, His blood.

And what do you do with that bread? Do you look at it? Yes, with tears in your eyes! What do you do with the cup? Do you regard it? Yes, with loving eyes. But this is not all. Take, eat! says the Savior. Drink, drink all of it, He says. And as you eat and drink, you are thereby reminded of the great Truth of God that He has given you His flesh to eat and His blood to drinkand that these, like some healing medicine, will purge you of all diseases, cleanse you of every lingering cancer, go through and through the secret parts of your soul and expel with their sanctifying influence the very roots and seeds of corruption and make you perfect in every good work to do His will.

I admit that you may not feel this at present, but you have that within you in having received Christ which will be the death of all sin. He has given Himself to dwell in you, to kill every lust, to slay every corruption, to expel the Canaanites out of the Canaan of your heart till King David shall reign in Jerusalem and the Jebusite shall be put away forever. Beloved, this is the way in which He sanctifies and cleanses His Churchby giving Himself for herfirst upon the tree and afterwards in the Church, by the work of the Holy Spirit as a quickening and cleansing power, dwelling there forevermore.

When the text says, He gave Himself for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her, is there not allusion here to the double cure of sin? Here is Christ sanctifying by the Spirit, that is to say, taking away the propensity to sinkilling the power of sin in ushelping us to reign over our corruptions that we may in heart and life be pure, even as our Father which is in Heaven is pure. And as to the cleansing, may not that allude to justification and pardon? Of that we spoke particularly last Sunday to our own joy if not to yours. We are complete in Him. We are perfect in Christ Jesus and the design of Christ is that sanctification shall be as perfect as justificationthat the power of sin shall be as thoroughly slain as the guilt of

itthat altogether sin shall cease to be in the Christian.

But what is the outward instrumentality which Christ uses? The text says, With the washing of water by the Word. We Baptists are generally thought to lay great stress upon Baptism. There can be no greater mistake made than to suppose that we exaggerate its importance. I sometimes think we do not value it enough! Those who practice infant Baptism might be much more fairly charged with exaggerating the importance of Baptism than those of us who scrupulously require a profession of faith from all persons before we think of baptizing them into the name of the Lord. I do not believe that Baptism is intended here, nor even referred to.

I know that the most of commentators say it is. I do not think it. It strikes me that one word explains the whole. Christ sanctifies and cleanses us by the washing of water, but what sort of water? By the Word. The water which washes away sin, which cleanses and purifies the soul is the Word. The Word of God has a cleansing influence. It comes and convicts the man of sin. It makes him see his impurity so as to hate it. When applied with power by the Holy Spirit, it works repentance. It leads the man to weep and bewail himself before God. That same Word leads to faith in Christ Jesus and faith works by love and purifies the soul.

The Word is preached, the Word is believed. And as soon as ever that Word is believed, it begins to act like water in the heart of man. You cannot receive the Gospel and yet be as filthy as you were before. My Brothers and Sisters, if you really welcome the Truth of God, those grosser sins will be washed away at once. Next, as you discover them, your besetting sins will be cleansed away and constantlyas you understand the Word better, believe it more firmly and feel its effect more powerfullyyou will by it, as by water, be washed and cleansed from all indwelling sin till you are sanctified and cleansed and made fit to enter into Heaven!

This one thing let me say solemnlyI go not into this world to preach the efficacy of baptismal water in cleansing souls from sin. Let those who care to do it, and think it their office, magnify their office exceedingly. Let those who think that sacraments have necessarily efficacy in them stand out and boldly declare it. But as for us, we believe that the water which cleanses is none other than the Word of God which is preached by man and applied by the Holy Spirit! We rest upon the uplifted Cross of Christ, upon the doctrine of His Atonement, on the great Truth of His abiding Presence in the Church of God and ever pray, Sanctify us by Your Truth. Your Word is Truth.

And, mark you, the world has had a fair trial of both plans. Throughout the dark ages the world tried the efficacy of Baptisms and sacraments century after century Popery and priest-craft gutted the world with the idea that Baptism and the sacrament of the Lords Supper were a prescription for cleansing away sin. What was the result? Were not the cities filled with harlots? Were not the dungeons crowded with prisoners? Had not the earth become an Aceldama and was not the whole land, like Sodom, reeking with filth?

Then came Luther and Calvin and though these men held not all the Truth of God in its fullness, yet, at least they held, the washing of water by the Word, and Luther and Zwingli and Calvin declared, The worlds great purgative is faith in Jesus Christ, not sacraments. The priesthood lies with Christ and not with men. Priest-craft is to be put away. Justification is by faith in Jesus Christ and that faith comes by hearing and that hearing by the preaching of the Word.

And what happened? Why, the world woke as from a long slumber! She found herself in chainsshe snapped the chains as Samson snapped the green withes. Progress cameknowledge, light, truthand if the world is not holy, yet what strides has she made since the day when Tetzels Indulgence for Sin defiled the world through and through to its very center with blasphemy! We have but to keep on using this washing of water by the continual preaching of the Word and the day shall come when our poor planet shall be cleansed from blood and filth and shall come out from the mists in which she is now enveloped and shine like her sister stars, bright in the light of her God!

And the only sounds that shall be heard from her shall be songs of joy and peace, because the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. This, then, is Christs way of cleansing and sanctifying His Churchby the washing of water, that is to say, by the Word of God.

III. And now let us pass on, again troubling your patience, to the third pointTHE LOVED ONE AS SHE IS PERFECTED. One is inclined to draw a veil over the face of beauty which never can be painted. She is to be a glorious Church. We love our own highly-favored Church. I am sure there is not a member of itat least I do not know onethat does not feel his heart leap every time he thinks of this Church which God has so prospered and blessed and honored.

For all that, we are nothing but a militant Church and a very imperfect onea Church that has cause to mourn and humble herself before God for many sins. And I, as pastor, looking upon you all, cannot help while I bless God for all I see that is excellent, bowing my own head in the dust because of the sins of a people favored with the Gospel who, nevertheless, have much to confess before God. We are not a glorious Church. You can cast your eyes upon such churches as the Moravians who gave themselves up, men and women, to Christs cause and scattered themselves all over the world, preaching the Gospel.

Greenland was not too cold. The Sahara was not too hotthey sacrificed everything for Christbut yet the Moravian Church with all its excellence has much of which it may well repent. It is not a glorious Church. You may look where you like and you shall see that the dust of travel is still upon the wilderness Church. She has the Presence of Godshe has her Shekinahbut alas, she is troubled within by a mixed multitude. Korab, Dathan and Abiram sometimes vex her. Her Master has to send her fiery serpents sometimes and she still needs to keep the bronze serpent lifted up every day. Even in her ranks there are some that still need to look and live.

We have no glorious Church on earth, nor do I think we can get much idea of what a glorious Church is. I tried yesterday, last Sunday rather, (and all the days since then seem to have gone so rapidly that I thought it yesterday). I tried last Sunday to show what a glorious person was. But what must a glorious Church be? There is one lamp. Well, that is very

bright, very pleasing. You like to have it in your roombut think of all London illuminated to the very top of the cross of St. Paulsand what an idea you then have of brightness!

Now, one glorified Christian is a lamp. Think, then, of all Heaven with its domes of Glory lit up with ten thousands times ten thousands companies of blood-bought spirits whom Jesus Christ has taken upa glorious Church! One flower is very sweet. I smell its perfume. But I walk into some vast conservatories, into some gentlemans garden, acres in size, and there are beds of flowersblue and scarlet, and yellow. I see the verbena, the calceolaria and the geranium and many others, all in order and in ranks. Oh, how glorious is this!

Those undulating lawns, those well-trimmed hedges, those trees so daintily keptall growing in such luxuriance. One flower is sweet, but a garden! A garden! Who can tell how sweet this is? So, one glorified saint is one of Gods flowers, but a glorious Church is Christs garden! A drop of water may be very precious to a thirsty tongue, but a river full of it! Children are pleased, when for the first time in their lives they sail across some little lake. But how surprised they are when they come to the deep and rolling sea which seems without shore or bottom!

Well, so pleased am I at the very thought of the glorious Church. As yet I have never seen anything but one little lakethis Churchthe Church of God in England. The Church of God in the worldwhat is it, after all, but a drop in a bucket? But the glorious Churchthe whole of the people of God gathered together in one, all perfectly free from sin, all made like unto Christ and all bright with the Glory which excels even that which Moses and Elijah had when they were with Christ in the holy mountain! Or such as Moses had when he came down from the top of Horeb, when he had been forty days with Goda glorious Church, a mighty company of glorified beings!

But do observe what is said of her. She is to be, Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Without spotthat is much. But, you see, spots can be taken off. The face is washed and the spot comes out. The garment is thoroughly cleansed and there are some chemicals and acids applied and the spots can be removed. Though, truly, some of us have scarlet spots of a crimson-like dye, yet the blood of Jesus is a wonderful detergent and it can get out spots of any color. Though we may have been lying in the lye-tub of sin even for seventy years, yet Christ will get all the spots out of us if we are a part of His Church.

Though His Church is double dyed, yet Christ will make her white as snow. But that is not the wonder of the text. The marvel is, without spot or wrinkle. You may get a spot out of your face, but you cannot smooth out a wrinkle! You may make what efforts you please, but you cannot get rid of your wrinkles. You that are getting old, if time has come and driven his plow across your brow, why there the furrows will remainthey will not come out. Yes, but the Church of Christ is to be without wrinkle as well as without spot! How will He get the wrinkles out? There is no chemical that I know of that can get rid of them.

But Jesus Christ has a sacred art, having in Himself, by the washing of water, even the Word, the power to get wrinkles out! Lightfoot says there is an allusion here to the carefulness of the Jew in his ablutions. The Jew not only washes very carefully when he is purifying himself for worship, but lest any dust or impurity should remain in any crack of the skin, or in any wrinkle, he seeks by washing again and again with the severest care to get out the least filth that would be in the wrinkle.

Very good, Dr. Lightfoot, but the Jew cannot wash wrinkles out. He can wash away the dirt, but he cannot get rid of the wrinkle. But Christ can banish away both. Another good writer says that perhaps there is an allusion here to the fullers trade. The fuller gets out the spots first and then as the cloth may have been so folded up that there are creases and wrinkles in it, he uses different stretching and milling till at last he manages to get out the creases and wrinkles from the cloth as well as the spot. I do not know whether there is an allusion to that, but this I knowthere shall not be a spot of sin on any of Gods people, nor yet a wrinkle of infirmity!

They shall lose the effect of old age and weakness in their bodies and they shall lose the defects and infirmities in their souls. The outward spot shall be removed and the inward deformity, which was like a wrinkle ingrained into their very nature, shall also be taken away. But do observe the next word. The Holy Spirit seems to exhaust language to describe this purity. He says, Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! She shall have nothing like a spot, nothing that can be construed as a wrinkleshe shall be fair and the world shall be compelled to acknowledge that she is. The eyes of God shall look upon her. And though He sees in darkness and discovers the hidden things of night, even He shall discern neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing in any one single part of the body or the soul of any one of the members of the mystical body of Christ!

Oh what perfection, Beloved, is this! I cannot speak of it, but I can delight in thinking of it! I was trying to think last night what I should be like when I was freed from my spots and wrinkles. Ah, you can all see them nowI wonder you put up with them sometimes! But what shall I be when I have parted with them forever? And I shall get rid of them. Death is stamped on every infirmitythe Lord has put the poison into the heart of my inbred sins and bless His name for it. But what will you and I be like when we are perfect?

No hasty temper, no sloth, no wrong thoughts, no cold hearts, no dilatoriness in prayer, no sluggishness in praise. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there will be some of you so different we shall scarcely know you! When some Brethren die I believe they will go to Heaven, but they will be strangely altered by the time they get there. They are good people, but they have such crotchety ways, such strange sense of humor, such hot tempers that surely we shall have to be very wise people to know them in Heaven! We shall need to be informed who they are, they will be so greatly changed!

But this will be the happy state of allwhether altered much or little we shall be, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. I must not dwell longer, though the theme invites it. Hypocrisies, heresies, declensions, divisionsall these will be put away from the Church. Infirmity, doubt, sin, fear of every kind will be put away from every Believer and we shall be

presented blameless, holy and unreprovable in the sight of God!

IV. And lastly, THE LOVED ONE IS TO BE PRESENTED. It is said, He is to present her to Himself. Every day Christ presents His people to His Father in His intercession. The Holy Spirit presents poor sinners every day in conversion to Christ, but there is to be a day when Christ will present His glorious Church to Himself. When He shall come, then shall be the wedding day. There shall be heard the cry, Behold, the Bridegroom comes!

Then the virgins with their lamps trimmed shall go forth to meet Him and His Church shall enter into the supper feast, to sit down and sup with Him and He with her. Today the Church is like Esther bathing herself in spices, making herself ready for Ahasuerus, her lord and master. Today we are engagedat the coming we shall be married. We are waiting now impatiently for Himthen we shall be in His embrace. Today we wear not the crown, today we wave not the palmbut tomorrow when He comes we shall be crowned with Him and triumph with Him.

Let us long for His appearing. Let this bright hope sustain you in the dreary months of waiting and the weary hours of fighting, He comes! He comes! And when He comes He will be glorified in all His saints and admired in those that have believed on Him. I would to God we were all members of His Church! There is only one token of membership which is infallible and that is saving faith in Christ. If you believe in Jesus you shall be without spot or wrinkle. But if you believe not, you are not of His Church, and neither shall you be a partaker of His cleansing power nor of His glorious advent.

God give you a new heart and a right spirit and wash you with water this day by the Word, for Jesus sake. Amen.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1153 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MATCHLESS MYSTERY   
NO. 1153

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For we are members of His body,   
of His flesh, and of His bones   
Ephesians 5:30.

I DO not hesitate to say that this is one of the most wonderful texts in the whole compass of Revelation. It sets forth the mystery of mysteries, the very pith and marrow of the loftiest divinity. It is fitted rather to be the theme for a hundred elaborate discourses than for one brief homily. Most assuredly it is a deep that knows no sounding, an abyss where thought plunges into never-ending contemplations. He who handles it had need, first of all, to be filled with all the fullness of God. Therefore we feel incapable of dealing with it as it should be dealt withit is all too great and vast for uswe can no more hope to compass it than a child can hold an ocean in his hand.

Beloved, it is a text that must not be looked upon with the eyes of cold, theological orthodoxy which might make us content to say, Yes, that is a great and important Truth, and there leave it. It is a text to be treated as the manna was that fell from Heaven, namely, to be tasted, to be eaten, to be digested and to be lived upon from day to day! It is a text for the quietude of your meditation, when you can sit still and turn it over and, like Mary, ponder it in your hearts. Long and loving should be your gaze upon the facets of this diamond of Truth, this diamond of Revelation.

It is a golden sentence fitted for those choice hours when the King brings us into His banqueting house and His banner over us is love. When the distance between earth and Heaven has become less and less, till it scarcely existsthose undisturbed times when all is rest round about us, because He who is our Rest enables us to lean upon His bosom and to feel His heart of love beating true to us. I ask you, O my Brothers and Sisters, therefore, as though you were quite alone in your own chamber, to pray for that frame of mind which is suitable to the subject, and to pray for me that I may be placed in that condition of heart which shall best enable me to speak upon it. We need our thoughts to be focused before they can reveal to us the great sight before us. Get to the place where Mary sat at Jesus feet and then will this text sound like music in your ears.

Without any accompaniment of exposition from me, it will have all Heavens music in itWe are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Sevenfold will be the happiness of the spirit which knows how to sit down and to taste of the marrow and the fatness, to drink of the wine on the less well-refined, which are to be found in this Inspired declaration. Before I preach upon it, there is one thing which it is necessary for us to do. They have a way in Scotland, before the

communion, of fencing the table, that is to say, warning all those who have no right to come to the table to avoid the sin of unlawful intrusion, and so of eating and drinking condemnation unto themselves. They help the hearers to self-examination, lest they should come thoughtlessly and participate in that which does not belong to them.

Now, my text is like a table of communion richly loaded, and far from you to whom it does not belong, unless you learn the sacred way of coming in by the Door, into this sheepfold, where the pasture is so rich and green. If you come by Christ, the Way, come and welcome! If you rest in Him, if His dear wounds are the fountains of your life, and if His atoning Sacrifice is your souls only peace, come and welcomefor of you, and such as you, and all of us who are trusting in Jesus, it may be truly saidWe are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

But if not Believers in Him, this heavenly verse has nothing to do with you. It is the childrens bread. It belongs only to the children. It is Israels mannait falls for Israel. It is the stream which leaps from Israels smitten rock and comes neither for Edom, nor for Amalekbut only for the chosen seed, alone. Look back, then, to the beginning of the Epistle, and see of whom the Apostle was speaking when he said, we. This little word, we, is like the door of Noahs arkit shuts out and shuts in. Does it shut us out or in?

Now, the Apostle wrote his Epistle to those of whom he said, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Answer this question, you who would enjoy this textHave you made your calling and election sure? Has that matter ever been decided in your spirit after honest search and inquiry into the grounds of your confidence? Have you been led to choose your God, for if so, your God had long ago chosen you! That matter is ascertained beyond all question and out of it springs the undoubted assurance that you are one with Him, since of all whom He has chosen it is trueWe are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The Apostolic description is before you, I pray you read onHaving predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Do you know anything about adoption? Have you been taken out of the family of Satan and enrolled in the family of God? Have you the Spirit of adoption in you? Does your soul cry, Abba, Father, at the very thought of God? Are you an imitator of God as a dear child? Do you feel that your nature has been renewed, so that, whereas you were a child of wrath, even as others, you have now become a child of God? Judge, I pray you, and discern concerning these things, for on your answer to this question depends your condition before God, your union with Christ, or your separateness from Him.

Note, still, the Apostles words as you read on, To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Dear Hearer, do you know the meaning of those last words, Accepted in the Beloved? You can never be accepted in yourselfyou are sinful, and undone, and unworthybut have you come and cast yourself upon the work, the blood and the righteousness of Jesus? Are you, therefore, accepted, Accepted in the Beloved? Have you ever enjoyed a sense of acceptance so that you could draw near to God, as no longer a servant beneath the curse, but a son beneath the blessing? If so, come and welcome to the text! It is all your own!

But note the next verseIn whom we have redemption through His blood. Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, do you know the blood? I do not care what else you know if you do not know the blood. Nor do I much mind what else you do not know. You may differ very widely in doctrine from some of the Truths of God which I think I have learned from the Word of God, but do you know the blood? Were you ever washed in it? Have you seen it sprinkled overhead and on the side posts of the house where you dwell, so that the destroying angel passes you by? Is the blood of Christ the lifeblood of your hope? God save me from preaching, and you from believing in a bloodless theology! It is a dead theology! Take Christ away, take the Atonement by a substitutionary Sacrifice awayand what is there left? But, oh, if we in very deed have redemption through His blood, then we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The Apostle adds, The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. And here, again, I press home the question upon the consciences of the members of this Church, and upon the members of every professing Church of ChristHave you tasted forgiveness? Have you felt the burden of sin? Have you gone with that burden to the foot of the Cross? Has the Heavenly Father ever said to you, Your sins are forgiven you? Do you believe in the forgiveness of sins, and that in reference to yourselves? Oh, do not be satisfied unless you do! Do not be put off with a bare hope that perhaps your sin is forgiven you, but struggle after that blessed full assurance which is able to say

*Oh, how sweet to view the flowing   
Of my Saviors precious blood,   
With Divine assurance knowing   
He has made my peace with God!*

And if you do know, possess and enjoy the forgiveness of sins, then are you members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

Oh, how this last sentence concerning pardon and rich Grace seems to cheer my soul! If none might come but those who never sinned, my guilty soul could never venture near the Lord! If none might come but those who have committed little sin, then I must be debarred. But it is the forgiveness of sins on a grand scale! Let me read the wordsThe forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. So it is great forgiveness, the forgiveness of great sin, because of great love. O beloved Hearer, great sinner as you have been, yet if you are accepted in the

Beloved, and have redemption through His blood, then all that is in the text belongs to you!

So I will keep you waiting in the vestibule no longer, but set the door wide open, saying, Come in, you blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? I pray the Holy Spirit to help you come in to this high festival, give you a sacred appetite and enable you, now, to appreciate the extraordinary sweetness of the words before us! First, I shall try and expoundand it must be but feebly what the text means and, secondly, what the text secures.

I. First, WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN? We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Read it in the light of the second chapter of the book of Genesis, for it is evident that there is a distinct allusion to the creation of before. The very words of Adam are quoted and we are mentally conducted to that scene in the Garden of Eden when the first man gazed upon the first woman, created to be his dear companion and helpmeet. What did Adam mean when he used these words? The great Husband of our souls must mean the same, only in a more spiritual and emphatic sense.

First, there was meant here similarity of nature. Adam looked at Eve and he did not regard her as a stranger, as some creature of a different genus and nature, but he said, She is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. He meant that she was of the same race, a participant in the same nature. He recognized her as a being of the same order as himself. Now, that is a low meaning of the text, but it is one meaning.

Beloved Brethren, think of this Truth for a moment. Jesus, the Son of God, counted it not robbery to be equal with God. Without Him was not anything made that was made. He is very God of very God. Yet He deigned, for love of us, to take upon Himself our nature, and He did it completely, so that He assumed the whole of human nature, apart from its sin. And in that respect we may say of ourselvesthat we are bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh. The very nature which we wear on earth, Christ Jesus once carried about among us, and at last carried aloft to Heaven. You believe in His Godheadtake heed never to commingle His Godhead and His humanity. Remember, Christ was not a deified man, neither was He a humanized God.

He was perfectly God, and at the same time perfectly Man, made like unto His brethren in all things. Dwell for a moment upon this Truth of God, for the text sets it forth. Born of a human mother and swaddled like any other child, He was, from His birth, as perfectly human even as you are. In nothing did He differ from you except in this, that He never wandered from God and broke His Commandments, and He was not defiled with that hereditary taint of Original Sin which dwells in you by nature. The like depressionsthose which sadden your spiritHe knew. The temptations of our nature assailed Him. Men and devils both sought to influence Him. He was amenable to all the external physical arrangements of the globe.

On Him the shower pelted down and wet His garments. And on Him the burning sun poured forth its undiminished heat. Upon His sacred Person on the lone mountainside, the dews descended till His head was wet with them, and His locks with the drops of the night. For Him there were poverty, hunger, thirst, reproach, slanders and treachery. For Him the sea tossed the boat as it will for you. And for Him the land yielded thorn and thistle, as it does to you. He suffered, He ate, He toiled, He rested, He wept and He rejoiced, even as you do, sin, alone, excepted. A real kinsman was He, not in fiction, but in substantial reality. Are you man? Jesus was a Man! Do not doubt it. Do not look at your Lord as standing up there on a pinnacle of superior nature where you cannot come near Him, but view Him as your own flesh and blood, a Brother born for adversity.

For so he is. He comes to you and says, Handle Me and see. A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have. He invites your faith to look at the prints of the nails and the scar of the spear. Did He not, after He had risen from the dead, prove His true humanity by eating a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb? And that same humanity has gone to Heaven! The clouds received it out of our sight, but it is there

*A Man there was, a real Man,   
Who once on Calvary died;   
And streams of blood and water ran   
Down from His wounded side.*

That same blest Man exalted sits high on His Fathers throne. Believe this, and you will see how He is bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. And then remember that, as His Nature is as yours, so, in another sense, He has made your nature as His, for you are born-again and gifted with a higher life. You were carnalHe has now made you spiritual. You could not drink of His cup, or be baptized with His baptism till His Spirit had come upon you.

But now you are made partakers of the Divine Naturestrong words, but Scripturalpartakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. For as you have borne the image of the earthy Adam, you shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now, you, as spiritual men, cry out to God in prayer, and so did He when He was here. Now you are in an agony as you strive with God and so was He, but the bloody sweat is a part of His substitutionary work in which He trod the winepress alone. His meat and drink was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and it is yours, I trustat any rate, it should be if you are your Lords. He lived for God. He lived and died for love of men. And that same love of God and man, though in a feebler measure, burns within your heart.

You are, therefore, now made, by His Grace, to participate in His moral and spiritual Nature, and you will never be satisfied till you awake in His likeness. And you will awake in His likeness, so that when He sees you and you see Him, then it shall be abundantly manifest to you that you are a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones

*Such was Your Grace, that for our sake   
You did from Heaven come down.   
You did of flesh and blood partake,   
In all our sorrows one.   
Ascended now, in glory bright,   
Still ours with us You are.   
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height.   
Your saints and You can part.   
Oh, teach us, Lord, to know and own   
This wondrous mystery,   
That You with us are truly one,   
And we are one with Thee!   
Soon, soon shall come that glorious day,   
When, seated on Your Throne,   
You shall to wondering worlds display,   
That you with us are one!*

Similarity of Nature, then, is the first meaning of the text.   
Regard, I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, with much solemn attention,  
a higher step of the ladder. It signifies intimate relationship, for I hardly   
think that Adam would have said quite so strongly, She is bone of my  
bones, and flesh of my flesh, if he had thought that the woman would   
disappear, or would become the wife of another. It was because she was to   
be his helpmeet and they were to be joined together in bonds of the most  
intimate communion, that, therefore, he said, Not only is she of the same   
bone and flesh as I am, but she is bone of my bones, and flesh of my  
flesh. She is related to me. What a near and dear and loving relationship  
marriage has bestowed upon us! It is a blessing for which good men  
dwelling with affectionate wives praise God every day they live. Marriage and the Sabbath are the two choice gifts of primeval love that  
have come down to us from Paradisethe one to bless our outer and the   
other our inner life. Oh, the joy, the true, pure, elevated peace and joy  
which many of us have received through that divinely ordained   
relationship! We cannot but bless God every time we repeat the dear  
names of those who are now parts of ourselves. Marriage creates a   
relationship which ends only when death parts us. Only then may it may   
be dissolved. Alas, sin enters even here! A dark crime may be committed,  
but, with the exception of that, it is for lifefor better, for worseonly the   
mortal stroke can part.   
Now think of it. As is your relation, O woman, to your husband, and as  
is your relation, O man, to your wife, such is the relation which exists   
between you, as a believer in Jesus, and Christ Jesus your Lord! It is the   
nearest, dearest, closest, most intense and most enduring relationship   
that can be imagined. I love and bless God, forever declaring that His   
relationship to us may be likened to that of a father or a mother to a child.   
Did you ever hear those words without tears(I think I never did)Can a   
woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on  
the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. And yet there is a closer intimacy, somehow, in the relationship which   
is declared in the text, because there is a kind of equality between the   
married ones, tempered by that headship of which the Apostle speaks and   
which we delight to recognize in our beloved Lord towards ourselves. The   
child cannot, while it is yet a babe, at any rate, enter into its mothers   
feelings. It is far below the mother. But the wife communes with her   
husbandshe is lifted up to his level! She is made a partaker of his cares   
and sorrows, of his joys and his successes, and the intimacy arising out of  
their conjugal union is of the closest kind.   
Nowagain I say it, and I cannot open it up further than to say it  
such is the relationship between the Believers soul and the Lord Jesus.  
Well did the spouse break out with the rapturous language, which forms  
the first word of the songLet Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth,  
for His love is better than wine, as if she did not need to describe her  
relationship, but longed to enjoy the sweets of it. My Brothers and Sisters,  
I pray you may so enjoy it, that now, if you are poor in this world, if you   
are an orphan, if you are almost alone in this great city, you may feel, No   
longer am I an orphan, no longer am I alone. My Maker is my Husband.  
The Lord of Hosts is His name, and my Redeemer, the Mighty One of  
Israel. And from this day forth will I rejoice that I am bone of His bones,  
and flesh of His flesh. Similarity of Nature and closeness of relationship   
are evidently in the text.   
But I clearly see another and deeper meaning. It meant, from Adams   
lips, mysterious extraction. I will not make bold to say that he knew what   
had occurred to him in his sleep. He might not have known all, but he  
seems to have had a mystic enlightenment which made him guess what  
had occurredat least the words seem to me to have that ring in them.   
She is bone of my bonesfor a bone had been taken from him, and   
flesh of my flesh, for out of him had she been taken. He seems to have  
known that somehow or other she sprang from him. Whether he knew it  
or not, Christ knows right well the origin of His spouse! He knows where   
His Church came from. There is still the mark in His sidethere is the   
memorial in the palms of His hands and on His feet.   
From where came this new Eve, this new mother of all living? From   
where came this spouse of the second Adam? She came of the second   
Adam. She was taken from His side, right near His heart. Have you never   
read, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone;   
but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit? Had Jesus never died, He would   
have been made to abide alone as to any who could be helpmeets for Him,  
and could enter into fellowship with Him. But, inasmuch as He has died,   
He has brought forth much fruit and His Church has sprung from Him.   
And in that sense she is bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh. What do I mean by the Church? asks one. I mean by the Church all  
the people of God, all the redeemed, all Believers, as I explained at the   
commencement. Do you think I mean by the Church the harlot of the   
seven hills? God forbid that Christ should have fellowship with her! How can He so much as look upon her except with horror? Do you think He means, by the Church, the politically supported corporation that men call a Church nowadays? No, but the spiritual, the quickened, the living, the believing, the holy peoplewherever they may beor by whatever name they may be called. These are they that sprang of Christ, even as Levi from the loins of Abraham. They live because they receive life from Him and at this day they are dead in themselvesand their life is hid with Christ in God. So the text leads us to a deep meditation as to mysterious   
extraction.   
But I find the time goes too swiftly for me and I must observe, next,   
that I am sure that in the text there is more than this. There is, in the  
fourth place, loving possession. He said, She is bone of my bones, and   
flesh of my flesh. He felt she was his own and belonged solely to him. Of   
anything there might be in the Garden, Adam was but owner in the   
second degree. But when he saw her, he felt she was all his own. By  
bonds and ties which did not admit of dispute, his bone and his flesh was   
she. Now, Beloved, at this moment let this thought dance through your   
soulyou belong to Jesusaltogether you belong to Jesus! Let not your   
love go forth to earthly things, so soiled and dim, but send it all away, up   
to Him to whom you belongyes, send it all to Him.   
Set not your affection upon things on the earth, but set it all upon   
things above, for you belong wholly to your Lord. All that there is of your   
spirit, soul and bodythe treble kingdom of your natureChrist has  
purchased by His blood. It were a dark thought to cross a mans mind,  
that his spouse belonged in part to some other. It could not be! And will   
you provoke your Lord to jealousy? Will you suffer it to seem so by your   
actions or your words? No, rather say tonight, anew   
*Tis, done, the great transactions, done! I am my Lords and He is mine!   
He drew me, and I followed on,   
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.   
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,   
That vow renewed shall daily hear,   
Till in lifes latest hour I bow,   
And bless in death a bond so dear.*   
For you are not your own, you are bought with a price. We are   
members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We belong entirely  
to Him.   
And to close this expositionthis skimming of the surface, rather  
there is one more matter and this is the very essence of the meaning. A   
vital union exists between us and Christ. When the Apostle wrote, showing  
that we were one with Christ, as the wife is with the husband, he felt that   
the metaphor, though it set forth much, did not set forth all. He would   
have us know that we are more closely knit to Jesus than is a woman to  
her husband, for they are, after all, separate individualities, and they may  
act and too often do so, far too distinctly for themselves. But here he puts   
it, We are members of His body. Now, here is a vital union, the closest imaginable! It is not unityit is identity! It is more than being joined

to  
it is being made a part ofand an essential part of the whole! Do you think I strain the text and go beyond the fact? Listen to this   
word. The Apostle, in speaking of the Church, said, concerning Christ,  
that the Church was His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.   
And note the majesty of that speechthat the Church should be the   
fullness of Christ! Now, Christ, without His fullness, is evidently not full  
He must have His peoplethey are essential to Him. The idea of a Savior  
is lost, apart from the saved. He is a head without a body if there are no  
members. Without His people Jesus is but a king without subjects, and a   
shepherd without a flock. It is essential to any true thought of Christ that   
you think of His people! They must come in. They are one with Him in   
every true view of Jesus Christ our Lord.   
How are we one with Him? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, much might be   
said, but I fear little would be explained by words. I want you to feel it and  
to be comforted by the fact of the vital union of Jesus and His people.   
Have you never heard Him say to you   
*I feel in My heart all your sighs and your groans, For you are most near Me, My flesh and My bones. In all your distresses, your Head feels the pain, They all are most necessary, not one is in vain?*   
Oh, do get to know this, you tried and tempted ones, you poor povertystricken people of God! Get to know this, you who could not help coming  
here tonight, wet as it was, because you must have spiritual meat, you   
were so hungry after your Lord! Oh, do get this morsel now, and feed on  
it! You are one with Him! You were buried in Him in baptism unto death,  
wherein also you have risen with Him! You were crucified with Him upon  
the Cross! You have gone up into Heaven with Him, for He has raised us   
up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ  
Jesus. And surely you shall be actually in your very person with Him  
where He is, that you may behold His Glory! You are one with Him! Now, tie up these five Truths of God like five choice flowers in a   
nosegay. Band them, like sweet spices, and let them be a bundle of  
camphire and a cluster of myrrh to lie all night upon your bosom to give  
you rest and to sweeten your repose. There is between you and your Lord  
a similarity of Nature and an intimate relationship! You have a mysterious   
extraction from Him and He has a loving possession of youand a vital   
union with you. Come, now, we must only have a few minutes to catch   
some of the juice that will flow out of these clusters of Eshcol while we   
tread them for a moment, just to show what the wines of the kingdom are   
like.   
II. WHAT DOES THE TEXT SECURE? First, it seems to me, that the   
text secures the eternal safety of everyone who is one with Christ. You   
know the figure we often use, that when a mans head is above water you  
cannot drown his feetand as long as my Head is in Glory, though I am   
but the sole of His footand only worthy to be trod in the mire, how can   
He drown me? Is it not written, Because I live you shall live alsoall of you who are one with Him? The idea of Christ losing members of His body is to me grotesque and at the same time ghastly. Does He change His members like some aquatic creatures which lose their limbs and get fresh joints? I know it is not so with Christ, the second Adam! Will He lose His members? Can He lose one member? NO! Then can He lose all? *If ever it should come to pass   
That sheep of Christ could fall away,   
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,   
Would fall a thousand times a day.*   
But herein lies our safetyI give unto My sheep eternal life, and they  
shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. I know  
that some have perverted this blessed Truth of God into the wicked lie  
that the Christian man may live as he likes and yet be safe. No such  
doctrine is to be found between the covers of this Book! The doctrine of  
the safety of the saints is far other than that! It is that the renewed man   
shall live as God likes, shall persevere in holiness and hold on his way  
until he arrives at the blessed perfection of his Lord, changing from glory   
to glory into that image which he shall reach and possess forever. I seeI   
pity those who do not see it, but I will not blameI see, I think, strong   
reason for believing in the security of every soul which is one with Christ. But, next, I see here a very sweet thought. If I am one with Christ, then   
I certainly enjoy, above all things, His love. Last Saturday week, in the   
evening, I was trying to turn over this text to preach to you from it in the   
morning, but I was wrung with bitter pains which made me feel that I   
should not preach, and kept me wearily waiting through the night  
watches. But do you know what comforted me very much about the text?  
It was that sentence which is a near neighbor of itNo man ever yet  
hated his own flesh. I seized upon that and my sad heart cried out,  
Surely the Man Christ Jesus never yet hated His own flesh. If we are   
members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, He may chasten, He   
may correct and lay on heavy strokes, and give sharp twinges, and make  
us cry outHe may even thrust us in the fire, and heat the furnace seven  
times hotterbut He never can neglect and abhor His own flesh! There is still love in His heart. I hate no part of my body, not even when  
it aches. I hate it not, but love it stillit is a part of myselfand so does   
Jesus love His people. And you, poor Sinners, who feel that you are not   
worthy to be called His people, nevertheless His love goes out to you,   
despite your imperfections. Having loved His own, which were in the   
world, He loved them to the end and He has left it on recordAs My   
Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you. Continue you in My love. Another most enchanting thought also arises from our subject. The   
Apostle goes on to say, No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but   
nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord of the Church. Oh, those   
two words, nourishes it. Are you living in a district where you do not get  
the Gospel? Well, then, go to the Gospels Lord and say to Him, Lord,  
hate not Your own flesh, but nourish me. Have you been for a while   
without visits from Christ? Have you lost the light of His countenance? Do not be satisfied with nourishinggo further and plead for cherishing! Ask for those love tokens, for those gentle words, for those secret blandishments known to saints, and to none but saints, for, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He will show them His Covenant. Go and ask for both these forms of love and you shall be nourished and  
cherished!   
The good husband does not merely bring so much bread and meat into   
the house and fling it down, saying, There, that will nourish you. Oh,  
not sothere are tender words and kind acts by which he cherishes as   
well as nourishes. And your Lord will not only give you bread to eat which   
the world knows not of, but He will give it to you according to His   
lovingkindness and the multitude of His tender mercies, for He makes us   
to lie down in green pastures, He leads us beside the still waters, gently  
guiding as a shepherd conducts his flock. Rejoice, then, that your   
nourishing and your cherishing are secure!  
I will not keep you longer when I have said this much. If we are   
members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, then He will one day   
present us to Himself, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, for  
the whole body must be so presented. Alas, our spots are many, and sadly  
mar our beauty! Brothers and Sisters, I love not to think little of my spots.   
I wish I had not even a speck. Alas, our wrinkles! Let us not talk lightly of  
them. It is most sad that on the Beloveds darling there should be a   
solitary blot. It is the worst wrinkle of all when a man does not see his   
own wrinkles, or when he does not mourn over them. But there are spots   
and wrinkles. I hope we do not say, Yes, they are there, and then add,  
And they must be there. No, Beloved, they ought not to be therethere   
ought to be no sin in us.   
If there is a sin which ought to be upon us, why it is clear it is no sin! A   
thing that ought to be is not a sin. If we served our Master as He deserves   
to be served, we should never sin, but our lives would be perfect.   
Therefore it is our daily burden that the spots and wrinkles still will   
showbut this is our consolationthat He will one day present us to   
Himself, holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle, or any  
such thing.   
*Oh, glorious hour, oh, blest abode;   
I shall be near, and like my God.   
Nor spot nor wrinkle shall remain,   
His perfect image to profane.*   
It will be a blessed thing, indeed, to have attained to this, to wear the   
image of the heavenly and be perfect even as our Bridegroom is perfect. Then, remember, all the glory Christ has we shall share in. You cannot  
honor a warrior who returns from the wars, and say to him, Great   
general, we honor your head. Oh, no, he who fought his countrys battles   
and won the victory, when he was honored was altogether honored as a   
man. And when the Master, at the last, shall have finished all His work  
and the whole battle that He undertook is finished and the victory gained.  
When He enters perfectly into His joy, we, too, shall enter into the joy of our Lord! Does He sit upon a throne? He has said we shall sit upon His Throne. Has He triumphed? We shall bear the palm branch, too. Whatever He has, we shall share. Are we not heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ? My soul feels ready to leap right away from this body at the thought of the glory that shall be revealed in usnot in Paul and Peter  
only, but in us!   
Poor things, poor things, that struggle hard each day with infirmities   
and trials, you shall be with Him where He is, and shall behold His Glory   
forever! So shall we ever be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these   
words.   
*Since Christ and we are one,   
Why should we doubt or fear?   
If He in Heaven has fixed His Throne,   
Hell fix His members there.*   
In this spirit come to the Communion Table and find your Master there!

But oh, if you are not resting in Him. If the blood was never upon you, you   
are condemned already because you have not believed on the Son of God!  
I pray that your bed may be cold and hard as a stone to you tonight and   
your eyes may forget to sleepand your heart may know no rest till you   
have saidI will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto Him,  
Father, I have sinned. Then take with you Jesus as a Mediator and draw  
near to the Throne of Grace! Plead His blood and merits, and you shall  
live! And then you, too, shall be able to join with the saints who say, We   
are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Amen. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONGenesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:22-33.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK761, 762.

A MESSAGE:   
I have revised this sermon at Cannes, to which place I have come for health. I am happy to inform all friends that I am already much better. The influences of a warm, sunny climate and rest from great labor are being blessed by Infinite Mercy to my restoration. I commend the work I am obliged to leave to the prayers of Gods people and I desire, also, to thank numerous friends for their substantial help to the College and Orphanage, so that I am not tempted to be anxious about funds for these at a time when ease of mind is especially desirable. With this I send most loving salutations to all my readers. May the Lord send to our beloved land a great revival of true religion.   
C. H. SPURGEON.

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MEMBERS OF CHRIST   
NO. 2244

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 23, 1890.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Ephesians 5:30.

YESTERDAY, when I had the painful task of speaking at the funeral of our dear friend, Mr. William Olney, I took the text which I am going to take again, now. I am using it again because I did not, then, really preach from it at all, but simply reminded you of a favorite expression of his, which I heard from his lips many times in prayer. He very frequently spoke of our being one with Christ in living, loving, lasting unionthree words which, in addition to being alliterative, are very comprehensive as to the nature of our union with Christ. Those three words, you will remember, were the heads of my discourse in the presence of that remarkable gathering which crowded this place to do honor to the memory of our Brother whose highest ambition was always to honor his Lord, whom he so faithfully served.

Paul here speaks only of true Believers. Men who are quickened by Divine Grace and made alive unto God. Of them, he says, not by way of romance, nor of poetical exaggeration, but as an undisputed matter of fact, We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. That there is a true union between Christ and His people is no fiction or dream of a heated imagination. Sin separated us from God and in undoing what sin has done, Christ joins us to Himself in a union more real than any other in the whole world!

This union is very near, and very dear, and very complete. We are so near to Christ that we cannot be nearer, for we are one with Him. We are so dear to Christ that we cannot be dearer. Consider how close and tender is the tie when it is true that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. It is a union more intimate than any other which exists among men, for Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. We were His enemies when Christ died for us, that He might save us, and make us so one with Himself that from Him our life should be drawn, and that in Him our life should be hid. It is, then, a very near and dear union which Christ has established between Himself and His redeemedand this union could not be more complete than it is.

It is, also, a most wonderful union. The more you think of it, the more you will be astonished and stand in sacred awe before such a marvel of Grace. Well did Kent say

*O sacred union, firm and strong,   
How great the Grace, how sweet the song, That worms of earth should ever be   
One with Incarnate Deity!*

But so it is. Even the Incarnation of Christ is not more amazing than His living union with His people! It is a thing to be considered oftenit is the wonder of the skies and is chief among those things which the angels desire to look into. On the surface of this Truth of God you may not see much, but the longer you gaze and the more the Holy Spirit assists you in your meditation, the more you will see in this wonderful sea of glass mingled with fire. My soul exults in the doctrine that Christ and His people are everlastingly one!

This is a very cheering doctrine. He that understands it has an ocean of music in his soul. He that can really grasp and feed upon it will often sit in the heavenly places with his Lord and anticipate the day when he shall be with Him, and shall be like He is. Even now, since we are one with Him, there is no distance between uswe are nearer to Him than anything else can ever be. The very idea of union makes us forget all distance. Indeed, distance is altogether annihilated! Love joins us so closely with Christ that He becomes more to us than our very selvesand though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

In passing, I may say that this doctrine is very practical. It is not merely a piece of sugar for your mouthit is a light for your path, for, he that says he abides in Him ought, himself, also, to walk even as He walked. We must take care that the love that was round about Christs feet is always shining on our path. We must go about doing good, following in the steps of our Lord. It would be giving the lie to this doctrine if we lived in sin, for, if we are one with Him, then we must be, in this world, even as He wasand being filled with His Spiritmust seek to reproduce His life before the world.

These thoughts may serve as an introduction to a fuller consideration of this great subject and I shall begin by saying that, in Holy Scripture, the union between Christ and His people is set forth under various forms. Then I will try to show you that the metaphor in our text is full of meaning. And, in the third place, I will prove to you that the doctrine of our union with Christ has its practical lessons. As we delight our hearts in the glorious Truth of God that we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, may we determine to live as those who are this closely joined to the Lord of life!

I. Our first thought is that THIS UNION IS SET FORTH UNDER SEVERAL FORMS. The blessed fact is almost beyond our highest thought! What wonder, then, that language fails adequately to describe it! Simile after simile is used. I am only going to mention four of them.

The union between Christ and the Believer is described as the union of the foundation and the stone. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house. We are built on Christ and built up into Him! We lie upon Him just as the stone rests on the foundation. Well may we sing

*All my hope on You is stayed,   
All my help from You I bring!*

The stone is one with the foundation in its dependence. In the time of our need, we press closer to Christ. The heavier our hearts, the more we bear our weight upon Him. It is the heavy stone that clings to the foundationthe light stone, perhaps, might be blown away. But we cling at all times, depending wholly upon Him, even as the stone rests upon the rock beneath. The stone does not bear up its own weight, it just rests where it is put. So do we rest on Christ. He is the Foundation and we repose on Him!

Again, the stone is one with the foundation in its adhesion. In the course of time, the stone becomes more and more knit to it. When first the mortar is placed there and is wet, you might also move the stone. But, byand-by, the mortar dries and the stone seems to bite into the foundation and holds fast to it. In old Roman walls you cannot break a stone away for the cement, which joins the stone to its fellows is as strong as the stone itselfand, truly, that which joins us to Christ is stronger than we are! We might be broken, but the bond of love which holds us, like a mighty cement to Christ, who is our Foundation, can never be broken away! We have actually become one with Him, as I have often seen stones in the walls of an old castle become one with each other. You could not break them awaythey are part and parcel of the wall and it would have been necessary to blow the wall to pieces before you could separate the stones from one another. So have we, by Gods Grace, become one with Christ, experimentally and indissolubly! The course of years has bound us still faster to Him.

The stone is one with the foundation, moreover, in its design. The architect, in placing the stone, was following out his plan. He planned the foundation and thought of every courseand the stone is essential to the wall, even as the foundation is essential to the stone. Thus we are one with Christ in the design of God. Reverently we say it, that Gods purpose comprehends not only Christ, but the whole company of His elect and, without His chosen people, the design of Jehovah can never be accomplished. He is building a Temple to His praise, but a Temple cannot be all foundation. There is a necessity for every stone in the wallin the Divine purpose there is a necessity that such a one should be a living stone, and such a one should be another living stone. The weakest and the meanest of the Lords people are as necessary as the noblest and the most beautiful, though, indeed, all are without any praise until they are built into the wall.

He that chose Christ, chose all His people. He arranged that they should be built up together and in Him, all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. Oh, I like to think of each one of us, however insignificant we may appear to be, as being bricks or stones in that great Temple of almighty Grace! Perhaps some of us may stand where everybody can see us, but what does it matter? If we are in the wall at all, it is well! Wherever you are placed, we are joined to Christ and, therefore, no one has a pre-eminence over any other, because we are all alike built upon the one Foundation, even Jesus Christ our Lord, into whom we daily grow, pressing closer and closer to Him in experience and holding tighter and tighter to Him by faith.

The second aspect in which our union with Christ is represented in the Scripture, is that of the vine and the branches. I am the vine, you are the branches, is the word of Christ to His disciples. The former simile of the foundation and the stone does not suggest any idea of life. Therefore, the Apostle, in using it, had to speak of Christ as a living stone and of us as living stones! It is a somewhat odd figure and yet it is strictly true, for you and I have no more spiritual life in us than stones, except as a miracle makes us live! And then, though we are living, yet like stones we are apparently inert and lifeless, albeit we are really quickened by a supernatural work and made living stones. But the figure is not congruous.

This second simile, however, conveys to us the idea of life, for a vine is no vine if it is deadand its branches are no true branches unless they are alive. There is a living union between Christ and His people and I hope that I can appeal to the experience of many here present who know that there is a living union between them and Christ. Happy is the man who can say, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The union is even more than a union of lifeit is a union of derived life. The branch is in such union with the stem that it receives all its sap from itit could not live unless the living juices flowed from the stem into it. And such is our life. Christ pours His lifeblood into us. Perpetually, as long as He exists, He seems to be oozing out into His people. In fact, when His wounds were open, He bled life into usand when His heart was burst, He changed our hearts and gave them life, though they once were hearts of stone. We are so one with Christ that we, at first, received our life from Himand we continue to receive it from Him every moment!

In consequence of the life of Christ in us, we grow. The growing of the branch is really the growing of the vine. It is because the stem grows that it sends its growth into the branch and manifests it there. As Christ pours His life-force into us, He makes us grow, to the praise of the glory of His Grace.

Fruit-bearing is the ultimate end of our union to Christ. We are one with Him that we may bring forth fruit unto His praise. Dear Friends, are we really doing this? Are we not satisfied with a nominal union to Christ, even though we bear no fruit to His honor? We ought to be very distressed when we are barren and unfruitful, remembering that the great Husbandman has a sharp knife and that it is written, Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away. Oh, that none of my hearers may ever be in Christ in that false way, but may we all be in Him in a union so true and vital as shall cause us to bear fruit to His praisefor then, though we shall be pruned, we shall never be cut from the vine!

The third metaphor which the Savior deigns to give of this union is that of the husband and the wife. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church. Here you have a union, not only of life, but also of love. It is worthy of notice that the two words, live, and, love, should be so like each other. In spiritual things, the two things are not only similar, they are exactly alike! Love is the life and life is always first sentand chiefly sent in the form of love.

With the true husband, his wife is himself. The Scripture says, He that loves his wife loves himself, and I believe that Christ considers that when He loves His Church, He loves Himself. His care for us is now His care for Himself. Since He has taken us to be in eternal wedded union with Himself, He regards us as Himself and He cares for us as He cares for HimselfFor we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. No sane man will injure his own flesh. No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the Church. So Christ takes care of His people because He regards them as being bound to Himself by those bonds which make them to be as Himself. Hence we are kept as the apple of His eye.

Remember that in every family, the wife is the mother of the children, and so it is in the Church of Christ. He would have us all bear unto Him a holy spiritual seed. If we abide in Him, we shall be able to propagate our faith and bring others into the Church. Every Believer should have this objective before him as the joy of his life, for thus shall Christ see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands.

The wife, too, is the keeper of the house. She takes care of the household concerns of her husband. And so would the Lord Christ have His people care for His interests and for all that belongs to Him, for He has committed these things unto us as the husband commits his treasures to his wife. He has left us in custody of all that He has. In one sense we are the stewards of His household, but in another and a clearer sense, we are united to Him by marriage bonds which can never be broken. It is a sweet subject, but I cannot linger upon it. You must let your own thoughts be fragrant with its aroma. However close may be the union of husband and wife, the union between the Believer and Christ is still closer. Oh, to realize more and more of it each day!

*O Jesus! Make yourself to me   
A living, bright reality,   
More present to faiths vision keen   
More than any outward object seen!   
More dear, more intimately nigh,   
Than even the sweetest earthly tie!*

All human imagery fails to set forth the union between Christ and His people, but the figure in our text is that of the head and the member. The Apostle says of Christ that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Christ is the Head and we are members of His body. Wonderful union, this! In the first metaphor, the foundation and the stone, we had the idea of rest. In the second, the vine and the branches, the idea of life. The union of the husband and wife gave us the thought of love. Now, here, we have the suggestion of identity. There are two lives in the husband and the wife, but there is only one life in the head and the body and in this respect this metaphor brings out the true relation of Christ to His people more clearly than any other!

There is a wonderful union between the head and the members of the body. It is a union of life and a union of the body which always continues. The husband may have to travel miles away from the wife, but it can never be that the head can travel away from the body. If I were to hear of any man whose head was six inches, or even an inch away from his body, I would say that he was dead! There must be perpetual union between the head and the members, or else death followsand the death, mark you, not only of the body, but of the head as well. They are dead when they are divided. How glorious is this thought when we apply it to the Lord and His redeemed people! Their union is everlasting! They would die if separated from Him and even He would cease to be did He lose them, for, somehow or other, they are so joined that He will not be without themHe cannot be without them, for that were for the Head of the Church to be divided from the members of His mystical body! Thus is we are able to sing

*And this I do find, were two so joined,   
Hell not be in Glory, and leave me behind.*

II. Having thus shown you these four figuresand there are others, but I have not time to speak upon themI now come to the one before us in the text and remark that THIS METAPHOR IS FULL OF MEANINGWe are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. There are seven points to which I would ask your attention.

There is here union of life, union of relationship and union of service. See what I mean. Your hand never studies what it can do for the head, but when the head wishes the hand uplifted, immediately up goes the hand. And when the head wishes that the hand should go down, down it goes in an instant! There is no deliberation or discussion about the matter. The head and the members, in a healthy body, are practically one. If you happen to be ill, it may be different. I have sometimes seen, in a person semiparalyzed, the leg throw itself out without any guidance from the head and, sometimeshow often has it happened to me!the head has willed that the hand should turn the pages of a book and the hand has been unable to do it.

Did you ever notice when you are falling, how, without thought, your hands always try to save your head? If any person were about to strike you, you would not deliberate, but up would go your arm to protect your head! This law is also true in spiritual life. All true Christians will do anything to save their Head. He saved us and now our desire is to save Him! We cannot bear that He should be insulted, that His Gospel should be despised, or that anything would be done against His sacred dignity. We are so one with our glorious Head that the moment anyone strikes at Him, up goes our hands immediately in His defense. Oh, I trust that you know what this meansif you are ever put up to the pain of hearing Christs Gospel falsely preached, or seeing professedly Christian men bringing disgrace upon His dear name, you feel at once that you would rather bear any pain, or any reproach, than that Christ should be injured! The hand is so one with the Head, that it endeavors to screen it.

Between the head and the members there is also union of feeling. If the head aches, you feel it all over, you are altogether ill. And if your finger aches, your head does not feel well. There is such a sympathy between all parts of the body that, whether one member suffers, all members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and members in particular. Christ is our Head and the Head specially suffers with the members. I do not know whether it is always so clear that one hand suffers with another hand as it is clear that the head suffers with either hand. So is it with the Church. It may not always be clear that all the

members sympathize with each other, but it is always clear that Christ sympathizes with each one of His people! There is a quicker way, somehow, from the head to the hand, than there is from one hand to the other, and there is a keener sympathy between Christ and His people than there often is between one of His servants and another. It is written concerning His people that, In all their affliction He was afflicted. In all your sorrows, child of God, your heavenly Head feels the pain!

There is, moreover, a union of mutual necessity between the members and the head. The head needs the body. Now, I must speak very guardedly here, when I refer the thought to Christ, but it is still true. What would my head be without my body? It would be a ghastly sight. And Christ without His people would be incomplete! A dying Christ redeeming nobody! A living Christ with no one to live by His life, would be a grim failure! Christ on Calvary and souls going down to Hell, with none saved by His precious blood? Christ Incarnate on the Cross without a single man saved by His Incarnation and His death? It would be a fearful sight! The Church is said to be Christs fullnessThe Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. This is a wonderful expression. Now, the fullness of the head is the bodytake the body away from the head, what is it? As to the body, what could it be without the head? If your head were gone, you could not have swiftness of foot, or deftness of hand, or strength of heart. No, there remains nothing for the head if it is severed from the body and nothing for the body if it is separated from the head! There is between them a union of mutual necessity.

There is, farther, between the head and the members a union of nature. I will not attempt to describe the chemical composition of human flesh, but it is quite clear that my head is made of the same flesh as my members. There is no difference between the flesh of one and the flesh of the other. So, though our Covenant Head is now in Heaven and His feet are on earth, yet Christ is still so one by nature with His people, that He is very Man of very Man, as much as He is very God of very God! If you deny His Humanity, I do not think you will long hold His Divinity. And if you deny His Deity, you have sadly destroyed the perfection of His Humanity for He is a perfect ManHe could not be if He so acted as to make men think that He was God, when He was not! To us He is God-Man in one Person, whom we love and adore! His Nature is the same as our nature and we are joined to Him forever

*Lord Jesus, are we ONE with Thee?   
Oh, height! Oh depth of love!   
With You we died upon the tree,   
In You we live above.   
Oh, teach us, Lord, to know and own   
This wondrous mystery,   
That You with us are truly ONE,   
And we are ONE with Thee!*

Between Christ and His people there is also a union of possession. Nothing belongs to my head that does not belong to my hand. Whatever my head can claim as its own, my hand may claim as its own. Whatever belongs to Christ belongs to you, poor Believer! Christ is rich, can you be poor? Even His Father is your Father and His Heaven is your Heaven, for you are so one with Him that all the broad possessions of His infinite wealth are given freely to you! He bestows upon you His bounty, not only to the half of the kingdom, but the whole of it. Joined to Himall that He has is yours!

Between the Lord and His Church there is also a union of present condition. Christ is very dear to His Fathers heart. This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, was the word which came from the opened Heaven concerning Christ and, as God delights in Christ, so is He also well-pleased with you who are in Christ. Yes, He is as pleased with you as He is with Christ, for He sees you in Christ and Christ in you! God makes no division between you and Him to whom He has joined you. What, therefore, God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Certainly God will never separate that which He has united in Christ! Do not put yourself asunder from Christ, even in your thoughts, by supposing that you are not well-beloved of God even as His own Covenant Head.

Last of all, there is a union of future destiny. Whatever Christ is to be, you are to be a sharer of it all. How can you die while Jesus lives? How can the body die while the head lives? If we go through the waters, they cannot overflow us until they overflow our head. While a mans head is above water, he cannot be drowned. And Christ, up yonder in the eternities of Glory, can never be conqueredneither can those be vanquished who are one with Him! Forever and forever, till the Christ shall die, till the immortal Son of God expires, you who are united to Him in the purpose of God and in faith which now lays hold of Him, shall live and reign! Because I live, you shall live, also. Is not that a quietus to every fear of destruction? You are so one with Him that when the sun becomes a burntout coal and the moon is turned into a clot of bloodwhen the stars fall as the leaves of autumn and the Heaven and earth shall melt away, going back into nothingness from which Omnipotence has called themyou shall live, for He shall live who is your Head! We believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death shall have no dominion over Him. Where He goes we shall follow!

I have heard it said that when a thief is able to get his head through the bars of the window, his body can easily follow. I am not sure of that, but I know that where my Lord has gone, His members shall surely be! I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, is a word that is meant for your consolation! Take it home. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and, as Doddridge sings

*Since Christ and we are one,   
Why should I doubt or fear?   
If He in Heaven has fixed His Throne,   
Hell fix His members there.*

III. Lastly, and briefly, THIS DOCTRINE HAS ITS PRACTICAL LESSONS, which I will try to set forth plainly so that those of us who are members of Christ may bring greater joy and glory to our Head than we have brought before.

To begin with, I would say, if we are, indeed, one with Christ, we should have no doubt about it. It used to be a fashion and, I fear, still is in some quarters, to think that mistrust of our own condition and doubt concerning our own salvation, is a kind of virtue. I have met with good people who would not say that they were savedthey hoped that they were. And I have met with others who were not sure that they were cleansed by the precious blood of Christthey trusted that they were. This state of mind is not a credit, either to Christ, or to ourselves!

If I told my son something, and he were to say to me, I hope you will keep your word, Father, I should not feel that he treated me as he ought. Surely, to believe Christ up to the hilt is the way to honor Him! If we are one with Him, we lose the comfort of it if we do not know, for sure, the fact of our blessed unionwe miss much of the confidence that comes of it if we do not clearly apprehend the realityand we are robbed of much of the joy which it brings. And how little of the meaning of that Word of God, the joy of the Lord is your strength, unless we believe simply, like children, and take the Word of God to mean what it saysand are certain about it!

This is an age of doubt, but, as for me, I will have none of it! I have doubted enough and more than enough! I have done with it long ago and I can say with Paul, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep which I have committed unto Him against that day. Salvation is by faith. Damnation comes by doubt! Doubt is the death of all comfort, the destruction of all force, the enemy of God and man!

If we are one with Christ, we should go through the world like princes. We should be like Abraham among his fellows, who claimed no princedom, and wore no crown, yet who could say to the King of Sodom what he had already vowed to God, I will not take from you a thread unto a shoe lace, and I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich. If you are one with Christ, treat the world in that way! O World, you cannot bless me! God has blessed me! You can not curse me! God has blessed me! Do you laugh? Laugh if it pleases you. Do you frown? What difference does it make to me? If God has smiled upon me, you may spurn me! If I am one with Christ, I expect that you should think little of me, for you did spurn my Head. Should the body of Christ expect better treatment than the Head received?

If we are one with Christ, we shall remember that to dishonor ourselves is to implicate our Lord. If I dishonor any part of my body, my head feels the shame of it. And since we are the members of Christ, we should be very careful how to behave, lest we should cause Him pain. Men will judge Christ by His people. If I caught sight of a pair of legs very unsteadily walking along the street, I would be inclined to say that they belong to a drunk head! If our walk among men is not such as becomes the Gospel, what harsh thoughts those around us may have of our Savior! Of course we know that any ill estimate of Him will be false, for He is all fair and there is no spot in Himbut still, His name and His cause will suffer dishonor. Let us not, then, injure or defile ourselves, lest we should bring reproach upon Him whom we love!

In the next place, if we are one with Him, to think of Him should be very natural. There are many of us who could say, without any exaggeration, that though we do not think so much of our Lord as we should, and are not so much with Him in contemplation as we desire, yet we have spent more time with Him than we have spent with anybody else. Little as we know compared with what we hope to know, yet His love has become to us now the brightest, the most conspicuous fact in all our history! We know but few things, but we know that we are one with Christ in a union never to be broken. We know Him, too, by our communion with Him. We saw Him this morningwe have seen Him during the daywe shall see Him, again, tonight. I should not like to go to bed with any other thought upon my mind than this

*Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,   
I lay me down to rest,   
As in the embraces of my God,   
Or on my Saviors breast.*

If we are one with Him, to live with Him should be the most natural thing in our lives. Have I not heard, however, of some professors who have not had communion with Christ for many a day? I talked, once, with a Brother who said a great deal about many things. And when he had complained of this and of that, I leaned forward to him and said, Brother, how long is it since you have had close fellowship with Christ? He answered, Oh, there you have got me! When I asked him, What do you mean by that? he answered, I am afraid that I have not had fellowship with Christ for months. I had suspected that it must have been so, or else his conversation would not have been of the kind it was. What a sad thing it must be for a wife to live in her husbands house and not speak to him for weeks! But how much worse it is for us to profess to be one with Christ and yet have no sort of communication with Him by the month together! This is something perfectly horrible! God save us all from such a thing! May we think continually of our Lord and always live with Him because we are one with Him!

Again, being one with Christ, to serve Him should be very natural. Indeed, we exist but to do His will and to glorify His name! Of what use are my hands and feet unless they move at the impulse of my head? They are but encumbrances unless they are ready to obey the bidding of my mind. If your arms hang helpless, you do not know what to do with them whichever way you turn, they are in the way! To be paralyzed is most unnatural, yet I fear there are many of us who are of little use to our Master. We hear His Word, but do not obey it. He calls for helpers, but we run not at His bidding! Come, come, this will not do! We are members of Christ and the one purpose of our life should be to serve our Head! God help us all to do it!

I will not continue longer. I leave you to draw the many inferences which naturally spring from our being one with Christ. Our Heaven lies in our union with Him. Yes, and sometimes, when we realize our oneness with Christ, we can hardly think that we should be happier in Heaven than we are now! May you all have this enjoyment! Oh, you would think that we raved if we told you the unspeakable delight, the immeasurable bliss which communion with Christ has brought into our souls! I desire that all of you should know the same rapture! I never enjoy a thing without wishing everybody to enjoy it and, therefore, when I come to this point of being one with Christ and the delight it brings, I would to God that you all knew it, too!

But alas! You do notsome of you do not even desire it. I have been talking something like Dutch to some of you tonightyou have not comprehended my language at all! May the very fact that you have not understood it, or cared about it, lead you to suspect that there is a joy which you have not known and a life which you have not found! And when you know that it is so, Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near. If you seek Him with all your heart, you will surely find Himand very soon you will also be brought into living, loving, lasting union with Christ.

Remember that the least touch of faith is sufficient to save the soul! That poor woman who came behind Christ in the throng only touched the hem of His garmentyet that timid touch brought healing and health to her! Virtue went out of Him into her and she was made whole of her plague! If you can only touch the Lord by the finger of your faith, yes, though it is your little finger, it shall be well with you! Though your hand is quivering with the palsy of unbelief, yet, still, if you have faith enough to touch Him, to come into contact with Him, you have set the whole machinery of salvation in motion! God give you faith to find eternal life even now! Why not? If my dear friend were here, of whom this drapery is a memorial, he would say unto me, Oh, tell them to taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed are all they that trust in Him! You know how fond he was of that verse we sang yesterday

*Oh make but a trial of His love;   
Experience will decide   
How blest are they, and only they,   
Who in His truth confide!*

God bless you all, for Christs sake! Amen.  
**Portion of Scripture Read before SermonEphesians 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK760, 761, 762.

Readers of the Sermons have probably all seen the very full reports published in the daily and weekly newspapers of the memorial and funeral service relating to their now glorified preacher. Those who took part in the impressive meetings at the Tabernacle, or gazed upon the almost countless multitude that thronged the road from Newington to Norwood, or formed part of the privileged company that gathered around the grave, must have felt that they were spectators of a scene without parallel in the history of this generation, at least. Comparatively few were able to hear all the tributes of love to the dear departed one, the Gospel he so faithfully preached, and the Savior he so fondly loved. Many will be glad to know, therefore, that a Memorial Volume will be issued, as soon as possible, containing a complete report of all the public services of the past week. Full particulars will be announced in due course.

Mrs. Spurgeon and all the members of the bereaved family, as well as the officers and members of Tabernacle Church, are deeply grateful for the almost innumerable expressions of sympathy which they have received from all parts of the world and all sections of the Church. They cannot attempt to acknowledge these communications, personally, but through various channels they have sought to convey the assurance of their heartfelt gratitude. And Mrs. Spurgeon has written a special, Message of Thanks, for the March issue of The Sword and the Trowel, which will be a Memorial number, containing all that can be recorded at present concerning its late beloved Editor. Mrs. Spurgeon continues to be very graciously upheld under her sore bereavement, but she is not yet strong enough to return home.

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LIVING, LOVING, LASTING UNION   
NO. 2245

FUNERAL ADDRESS

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 28 1892. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE FUNERAL OF MR. WILLIAM OLNEY, OCTOBER 22, 1890.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Ephesians 5:30.

BEFORE the funeral, at Norwood Cemetery, of the late Mr. William Olney, senior deacon of the Church at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, a service was held in the Tabernacle. The building was crowded with sympathizing friends who came to testify the affection they bore to the beloved deacon who had been so suddenly called from their midst. The senior Pastor presided. The hymn, They are gathering homeward one by one, was sung, and Pastor James A. Spurgeon offered prayer.

The hymn Why do we mourn departing friends? followed, and C.H. Spurgeon then read and expounded 1 Corinthians 15. The Reverend Burman Cassin, Rector of St. Georges, Southwark, briefly engaged in prayer, and the assembly sang the 34th Psalm, in the version beginning

*Through all the changing scenes of life,   
In trouble and in joy,   
The praises of my God shall still   
My heart and tongue employ.*

The hymn commencing, Forever with the Lord! was sung, and a concluding prayer was offered by Mr. James Spurgeon.

Pastor C.H. Spurgeon then rose and saidAs I am in a very unfit condition to speak to you this morning, I shall try for once to keep away from my subject, for if I dwell upon it, it will master me, and I shall not be able to speak to you at all. I am trying to suppress my feelings, that I may be able to find words.

I am going to speak about the favorite expression of my Brother, William Olney, which he frequently used in prayer. I wonder whether you will agree with me as to what it was? As my memory serves me, I have heard him a score of times, at least, use the following sentence when he drew very near to the Lord, his God, in prayer. He said, Lord Jesus, we are one with You. We feel that we have a living, loving, lasting union with You. I think that you must remember that gem of his. Those three words have stuck by me and ever since he has gone, I have found myself repeating them to myself quite involuntarilya living, loving, lasting union. He owed everything to that. He consciously enjoyed a living, loving, lasting union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you and I have that, we have all that we need for time and for eternity! If we have it not, we have nothing. Take anyone of us by himself, alone, he is lost, ruined, and undone. Take that same person linked with Christ by a living, loving, lasting union and he is a saintsaved, sanctified and sure to be glorified!

I have taken for my text the words which occur in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the 13th verse. Concerning our Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul says, We are members of His body, of His faith, and of His bones.

We, that is, His believing people, are members of His body, and of His flesh, and of His bones. He is our Head and we are the members of the bodyand so we are joined to Him by a living, loving, lasting union.

I am not going beyond those three wordsthey shall be my three points, but, at the same time, I will keep to my text.   
I. BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND CHRIST THERE IS A LIVING UNION. There was just that between my Brother, William Olney and his Lord. A living union! When he joined the Church of Christ, he did not offer it the distinguished honor of his name and then slip away and give his life to politics, or to business, or to amusement. But when the Church has his name on its roll, it receive the whole of the manbody, soul, and spirit and this because there was life in him!   
His union to Christ was not nominal, but actual. He was not merely covered with the Christian name, but he had the Christian spirit and the Christian life within him. Yes, his union to Christ was a living unionnot merely that of reliance, by which the stone leans upon the foundation though he had that, for never man understood more clearly the doctrine of faith in Christ. Christ was his only trust and confidence and he came to Him as the stones come home to the foundation stone. But it was a living union in his case, for the fruits of life were produced. It was the union of the branch to the stem in that blessed Vine which is Christ, Himself, even as He says, I am the Vine, you are the branches.

Now what does this living union to Christ mean?   
It means, first of all, Christs life laying hold of us. For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself. He is full of life and when He takes hold of us and raises our life into His, there is truly a living union between Him and us.   
But, further, this living union is Christs life in us. It is given to Him, not only to take us in our feebleness, but it is His Divine prerogative to impart life to us and to call dead menand to make them live. For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom He wills. This is how we come to have life in connection with Him. His life flows into us, as out of the tree into the branches, so that we can truly say, with the Apostle, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith to the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. The living union begins with our Lords life and then that life flows into us and we, also, begin to live.   
It was so with our friend, whom we so sadly miss from our midst today. A new life, a life of holiness, a life of service, a life of communion with God began in him by oneness with Christand it was continued in him by the same means. There was a living unionthe life of Christ had begotten life in himand this was seen continually in the fruit that he bore. I should not know, if I had to describe my departed Brother, which word to associate more fully with himlife, or, love. He was as full of life as ever he could be. He used to amaze me by his energyI mean not merely physical or even mental energy, but his never-ceasing, overflowing spiritual energy! If any of us were dull, he never was, and he would not let us be dull for long. He would often tell us, when we were not well, that he thought we looked amazingly well and he would try to cheer us up somehow or other, for he, himself, never seemed to lack for life, or fire, or force. I might almost say that, up to the last moment, he was energetiche died full of life! He was intense in the very highest degree until struck downand he was thus intense, not because of mere mental activity, but because of the burning zeal for God that was in his souland this zeal was the result of his living union with the Lord Jesus Christ.   
Because of this life of Christ which was in him, he bore suffering without flinching. If there was anything that could equal the industry of his work, it was the heroism of his patience. He has often amazed us by his fortitude. We have admired the way in which he has triumphed in Christ in spite of his sufferings, but we have felt that we could scarcely hope to imitate him to the letter. He went as far in the way of bearing pain with patience as he went in the direction of serving Christ with enthusiasm and this is saying a very great deal for any man. Therefore I do not say it for the man, but in praise of the Grace of God which helped him, whether he was active or passive, to still be buoyant and bright because of the living union which subsisted between him and Christ! A verse of the Psalms we have just sung, which was a great favorite of his, truly describes the resolution of his life   
*Of His deliverance I will boast,   
Till all that are distressed,   
From my example comfort take,   
And charm their griefs to rest.*   
Christ dwelling in him in fullness could both work and suffer. The fact that Christ lives in the Believer is as real as that He once lived on earth in a human body. He came, then, with a double-handed blessing. He came both to do His Fathers will and to bear the burden of the souls of men. He was active in doing good and, when the appointed time came, He as willingly bore the burden of the sins of men and suffered to the death without complaint. In like manner Christ lived in our dear friend, making him strong both to do and to suffer. God grant to you and to me, also, to have such a living union to Christ!   
Do you know anything of this experience, my dear Friends? Many of you doit is your life to be one with Christ. But to some of you I must be talking an unmeaning jargon. O Souls, if the life of Christ is not in you, you are dead while you live, and you will die forever when you die! Unless you get linked to Christ, you will be driven from the Presence of God and away from all that makes true life and joy. Lay hold on Christ, and you will lay hold on eternal life, for He is that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. Living contact with Him is our only hope, either for the present or for the future. If you are vitally joined to Christ, it is well with your soulbut if you are divided from Immanuel and have no living union to Christ, there is no eternal life for you! He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.   
**Living or dying, Lord,   
I ask but to be Thine,   
My life in You, Your life in me,   
Makes Heaven forever mine.**   
II. The next word to, living, in my dear Brothers frequent use, was, loving. BETWEEN THE TRUE BELIEVER AND CHRIST THERE IS A LOVING UNION. And oh, the union of a soul to Christ is made so sweet because it is as loving as it is living! My Brother-in-Christ, William Olney, truly loved! He seemed to have a love to everybody. He was never so pleased as when he was pleasing other people and he would go a long way, sometimes, to try and please people who would not be pleased. But still, his great ambition in life was to love others and to make others love Christ. Love ruled supreme in his actions. His union to Christ was not cold and formal, stiff and narrowhe had a union to Christ that was warm, human, intense, fervent, loving! There was fire in that man and the fire was the ardent flame of great affection to the Lord Jesus Christ.   
I would like to have a talk about this loving union to Christ on some other occasion, when I could trust myself more than I can do now at this very solemn service. [On the following evening, Thursday, October 23, 1890, Mr. Spurgeon preached on this subject. The discourse, entitled Members of Christ (No. 2244), delivered on that occasion, was published last week. (Footnote).EOD] Still, there are a few things that may be said upon this subject even now.   
Christs love to us begins this loving union. Its source is not in ourselves, but in love eternal, love immeasurable, love which caused itselfFreeGrace love, love to the unworthy, love to enemies, love to those who had no life, no strength, and no hope apart from Him. Christ loved us so that He deigned to join Himself to us in eternal union. The great Artesian well from which we drink and which has tapped the Divine fountains is the Love of Christ! This is where all our hope, our joy and our love begin. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. In connection with this same Truth of God of union with Christ and fruit-bearing as the result of it, our Lord, Himself, says, You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. When this Love thus made choice of us, He entered into Covenant with His Father concerning His peopleand before we were born He identified Himself with us, so that in the purpose of God from all eternity we were accepted in Him!   
But union with us meant union with our sins, and though the Son of God could never be overcome of evil, or become a sharer in human guilt, yet by the blessed mystery of His unity with His people, He could take their sin upon Himself and bear it in His own body on the Cross. Thus, as there is no past or future to the eyes of Him before whom all events are spread out in one eternal, now, the Son of God was able to atone for the iniquities of those who, through all the ages, would be truly joined to Him. His love that chose us did not shrink back from the awful payment which our debt rendered necessaryit was stronger than death, and mightier than the grave. Many waters could not quench it! Many floods could not drown it, nor will it cease to exert its blessed influence over us until it shall bring us Home to the mansions above! But not even then, for Christs love is everlasting! By this loving union Christ brings us safely through all the temptations of life. The ransomed spirits of such as are joined to Him are taken to be with Christ the instant they are absent from the body. And, at last, out of the tomb that same Love shall call the body and on the glad day of Resurrection it shall be clearly seen how wonderful is the love which made our Lord so one with us!   
This, then, is the way in which we came to a loving union with Christ He began to love us with a love that had no beginning, which has no measure and which shall know no change nor endand, therefore He united Himself to us forever. Well might Kent praise the name of the Lord for the wonders worked by such love as this as he sang   
*Heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus,   
Long ere time its race begun!   
To His name eternal praises!   
Oh! What wonders love has done!   
One with Jesus   
By eternal union one.*   
Our love to Christ completes this loving union. We first learn of His love to us and then, as the result of that, we are brought to love Him. Ours is a poor little love, not worthy of His acceptance, but, such as it is, we give it all to Him and He will not refuse it, or despise it! Oh, that we all might now be joined to Christ in love! I am sure that my Brother, who has gone from us, knew this union more than most of us. When we once got upon this glorious theme in private conversation, or when he touched upon it, himself, in his own public prayers, how His spirit seemed to burn and glow! He was always at home when speaking of the love of Christ, or of the love of Christs people to their Lord. He could truly say, as I trust many of us will truly say now   
*I give my heart to You,   
O Jesus, most desired!   
And heart for heart the gift shall be,   
For You my soul has fired.   
You, hearts alone would move,   
You, only, hearts do love;   
I would love You as You love me,   
O Jesus most desired!*   
In this loving union,

Christs love to us and our love to Christ flow in the same channel. Together they make a stream of love of a glorious kind. We love one another for Christs sake! Se love sinners for Christs sake! We love the Truth of God as Christ loves the Truth of God! We love the Father in the same manner that Christ loves the Father, though not to the same degree. There is, in fact, but one love in the Head and in all the members. What the Head loves, all the body loves! As one man we go with Christ. Being united to Him, His desires and longings become our desires and longingswe grow into His likeness and, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.   
Do you know anything about loving union to Christ? I feel sure that the great mass of those assembled here both know it and rejoice in it. Oh, to know it more! Oh, that His love were shed abroad more richly in our hearts! Now, by the Holy Spirit that is given to us, may we experience not only the tiny rivulets of love that some of us have had in the past days, but may we get to the torrents of love! May we be swept away by it, till, like a mighty ocean, it covers all our nature and becomes to us a very Heaven begun below!   
III. Our third point is that BETWEEN THE TRUE BELIEVERS AND CHRIST THERE IS A LASTING UNION. The whole phrase which our dear departed friend used so frequently was, living, loving, lasting union. O Friends, what a sad thing it would be for anyone to have only a temporary union with Christ! If I am speaking to any who were members of this Church years ago, but who are not even professors nowif I am addressing some who seemed to be earnest Christians once, but who have gone back from following ChristI would earnestly remind you that no union with Christ is living and loving unless it is also lasting!   
The man who is truly united to Christ does not become apostate. It is all in vain to seem to put on Christ for a time and then, after a little while, to put Him off again. That is the religion of the hypocrite, or of the merely temporary professor. But not so was it with our dear Brother who is sleeping yonder. When he joined the ChurchI think that it is rather more than 54 years agohe gave himself to the Lord and he has been kept and sustained and upheld until now. Why, there are some of you who have been members of four or five denominations during that time! You have changed your views with the varying seasons and have altered more often than we care to rememberwhile here he wasstaying steadfast and immovable all the time, remaining a member of the same Church and going on steadily with his work.   
It seems to me that some of you build for a year and pull down, then build again, and pull down once more. Why, you are not building at all unless your building stands! And you are not truly in union with Christ unless the union is a lasting union! And it will not be unless it is a living union! Your profession of Christ will be a lie and will help to sink you lower than the lowest Hell unless you endure to the end! Make sure work with what you do in religion. Do not play at being a Christian. If you are converted, be converted with your whole heart. If you have faith in Christ, have vital faith, or do not pretend to have any. Be realbe true to the core! Be satisfied with nothing short of that union which the Spirit of God works in the hearts of those who, without reserve, yield to His power. Otherwise that which you seem to have will not be a lasting thing with you and, at the end, you will be utterly cast off.   
Now think of the joy of this fact. Our union with Christ is not only lasting, it is everlasting. With great boldness we utter the challenge, Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? It is true that we hold Christ and that we will hold Him still tighter, but the greater mercy is that He holds us and He will never let us go! Does He not say, concerning His sheep, I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand? And will He not be true to His word? You may take Christ from our hand, but you cannot take us from Christs hand! He holds us fast. He is married to us and He, Himself, declares, The Lord, the God of Israel, says that He hates putting away. He will have no divorce between our soul and Himself. This living, loving, lasting union, which we have already found to be such a glorious reality, is to last forever and ever, blessed be the name of the Lord!   
I want you, beloved Friends, to draw much comfort from this Truth of God and then I will be finished. Christ will not lose His members. My head would not willingly lose a little finger and Christ our Head will not lose one of us if we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Do you think that Christ can be mutilated? Do you think that He will lose even the least joint of the least finger? Never shall that be true! The word written of His body of flesh is equally true concerning His mystical body, which is His Church. A bone of Him shall not be broken. Not even the smallest and most insignificant Believer in Christ shall be lost, otherwise would His body be incomplete. He is a perfect Christ and you that are members of His body shall never be cut away from His by the wounds of Satans sword, the surgery of infidelity, or any earthly accident or diabolical temptation. If you are one with Him, you will be one with Him forever, for the union between you and your Lord is an eternal unionto break it would be to disfigure and mutilate the Christ of God!   
Furthermore, in that we are one with Christ, He will raise our bodies. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones and, though I do not insist upon it, this verse has, to me, a kind of ring about it which would lead us to believe that if we are members of His body, He will take even our bodies to be members of Himself. Christ will not leave our Brother in the grave. His body will see corruption, but the tomb shall only be like a refining pot to separate the precious from the vile. When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, he said, There shall not a hoof be left behind, and when that One who is greater than Moses shall bring forth His people from their graves, there shall not a bone or a piece of a bone of His redeemed be left in the region of death! When the angel brought Peter out of prison, he told him to put his shoes on. Bind on your sandals, was the angelic direction. He would not leave even an old pair of slippers in the prison when he brought Peter out! The deliverance was to be absolutely complete. Thus, too, when Christ shall bid us put on our garments which He shall prepare for us in the Resurrection, no integral part of the man shall be left behind. O Grave, you must give up your prey! O Death, you must yield up your spoils! Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, they, as well as our souls, must be set free from the power of the last enemy. Therefore comfort one another with these words, whether it is concerning your own death, or the death of this dear Friend on whose coffin we look just now.   
Beloved, we are parting with our Brother, William Olney, for a while, but we shall meet again. We are so one with each other in truth and experience that we cannot be separated! He was a member of Christs body and of His flesh and of His bonesso am I and so are you, my fellow Believer! The members of one body must be one. And we shall meet our departed friend, again, before long. Perhaps in another week some of us may see his face. I wonder what he has been doing already in that land of light and liberty! Mr. Fullerton writes me saying that he would not wonder if he spent last Sunday telling the spirits above how he had spent the previous Sunday and making them all wonder at what the Grace of God had done among poor sinners down here on earth. He could tell the tale of Haddon Hall and of this Tabernacle, recounting the story of what the Lord has done in saving men and womenand I do not think the angels and the redeemed could be better occupied than in hearing what the Lord has been doing in His new creation here below!   
Very probably the conjecture is right, for the Grace of God reaches us to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. When they hear the story yonder, they will take down their harps and raise new hallelujahs to God and to the Lamb! Think not that I talk strangely. The angels rejoice over one sinner that repents and they will yet more rejoice when one messenger, newly come from the midst to Gods salvation work, shall tell them of scores that have been brought to the Saviors feet!  
Beloved Friends, eternity is ours, and a joyous eternity it will be to those who are one with Jesus Christ, in living, loving, lasting union. We shall soon ascend to the realms of the blest. There is a ladder waiting for us to climb and when we mount it, we shall have no reason to mourn. It is but for a little time that we shall have to keep the night-watches. The watchman of the night cries, The morning comes! The night of weeping will soon be past. Until the day beaks, and the shadows flee away, be of good courage. Patiently hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. He will surely come again and even the tears of today shall abundantly be recompensed to you.   
I pray that every blessing may rest upon every mourner this day. Indeed, dear Friends, while we mourn with you, we cannot but congratulate you that you have had such a husband, such a father, such a brother as our friend who is now taken home. I will not say that you have lost him, for that would not be true. God lent him to you for a long time and now He has taken him back!   
I think that it is about 15 years ago since, in the ordinary course of things, he might have been expected to have died. At least so it seemed at the time he was so sickyet with many tears and intercessions we prayed him back and God gave him something like Hezekiahs extra portion of life. We ought to be very thankful for that. In those 15 years, how much has he done? Rather, how much has God done by him for us all? Therefore we will not sorrow so as to

complain, but we will sorrow only so as to submit. The Lord be with you evermore! Amen.

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OUR MOTTO   
NO. 1484

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 20, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

With goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Ephesians 6:7.

THIS sentence was expressly addressed, in the first place, to servants, which term includes and, first of all intends, those who unhappily were slaves. There were many slaves in the Roman Empire and the form of bondage which then existed was of the bitterest kind. I can imagine a slave becoming a Christian and so finding peace as to his former guilt and obtaining renewal of heartand then, although rejoicing in the Lord, I can well conceive that he would often be downcast in view of his sad condition as a slave. I see him sitting down and moaning to himself, I am a bondsman under a tyrant master. I have already endured many cruelties and may expect many more. I would be free, but there is no hope of escape, since there is no place to which I can flee, for Caesars arm is long and would reach me at the very ends of the earth. I cannot purchase my liberty, nor earn it by long years of faithful servitude.

Neither can my fellow salves and I effect our deliverance by rebellion, for this has been tried and has ended in terrible bloodshed. I am hopelessly a slave. What shall I do? How shall I sustain my fate? My life is wellnear intolerablewould to God it were at an end. I can imagine the poor slave going to his cramped bed under the stairsfor in any hole or corner, the Roman slave might find such little rest as was allowed himand there he would almost wish to sleep himself into another world. Being a Christian, as I have supposed, he pours out his heart before God in prayer and, in answer to his cry, the Lord Jesus sets before him the rich consolation which He has provided for all that mournconsolation strong enough to enable him to endure to the end and glorify the name of Jesus even under such hard conditions!

While yet troubled in mind, this freeman of the Lord, who is yet in bonds to man, is met by the Savior Himself. He appears to himI will not say in such form as could be perceived by the eyes, but in clear enough vision to be exceedingly influential over his spirit. Jesus stands before him. The five wounds adorning Him like precious rubies are infallible tokens! The face lit up with an unearthly splendor is still marked with the old lines of sorrow and the head bears the crown of thorns still about its brow. The poor slave casts himself at his Redeemers feet with astonishment, with awe and with intense delight! And then I think I hear those dear lips which are as lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh saying to His poor servant, Fulfill your service bravely. Do it unto Me. Forget your tyrant master and remember only Me. Bear on, work on, suffer on and do all as unto Me and not unto men.

Then I think I see the broken-hearted captive rising up refreshed with inward strength and I hear him say, I will even bear the yoke until my

Lord shall call me away! Unless His Providence shall open for me a door of liberty, I will patiently abide where I am and suffer all His will, hopefully and joyfully serving because He bids me do it for His sake. A vision which would so greatly comfort the poor Roman slave in his extremity may well stand before each one of us. Let us each hear our Savior say, Live unto Me and do all for My sake. Our service is so much more pleasant and easy than that of slaveslet us perform it with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men. Our princely motto is, I servebe this sentence emblazoned on our banner and used as the battle cry of lifes campaign!

Notice well that the Holy Spirit does not bid us leave our stations in order to serve the Lord. He does not bid us forego the domestic relations which make us husbands or wives; parents or children; masters or servants! He does not suggest to us to put on a peculiar garb and seek the seclusion of a monastery, or the retirement of monastic or conventual life. Nothing of the kind is hinted at! But rather He bids the servant continue in his or her servicewith goodwill doing service. Our great Captain would not have you hope to win the victory by leaving your post! He would have you abide in your trade, calling, profession and all the while serve the Lord in it, doing the will of God from the heart in common things.

This is the practical beauty of our holy faiththat when it casts the devil out of a man it sends him home to bless his friends by telling them what great things the Lord has done for him. Grace does not transplant the tree, but bids it overshadow the old house at home, as before, and bring forth good fruit where it is! Grace does not make us unearthly, though it makes us unworldly. True religion distinguishes us from others, even as our Lord Jesus was separate from sinners, but it does not shut us up or hedge us round about as if we were too good or too tender for the rough usage of everyday life! It does not put us in the salt box and shut the lid, but it casts us in among our fellow men for their good!

Grace makes us the servants of God while we are the still servants of menit enables us to do the business of Heaven while we are attending to the business of earthit sanctifies the common duties of life by showing us how to perform them in the light of Heaven. The love of Christ makes the lowliest acts sublime. As the sunlight brightens a landscape and sheds beauty over the most common scene, so does the Presence of the Lord Jesus! The spirit of consecration renders the offices of domestic servitude as sublime as the worship which is presented upon the sea of glass before the Eternal Throne by spirits to whom the courts of Heaven are their familiar name.

I suggest my text to all Believers as the motto of their lives! Whether we are servants or masters, whether we are poor or rich, let us take this as our watchword, As to the Lord, and not to men. From now on may this be the engraving of our seal and the motto of our coat of arms! May it be the constant rule of our life and the sum of our motives. In advocating this gracious aim of our being, let me say that if we are enabled to adopt this motto it will, first of all, influence our work itself. And, secondly, it will elevate our spirit concerning that work. Yet let me add, thirdly, that if the Lord shall really be the All in All of our lives, it is, after all, only what He has a right to expect and what we are under a thousand obligations to give to Him!

I. Our subject opens with this reflection, that if from now on whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, THIS CONSECRATION WILL GREATLY INFLUENCE OUR ENTIRE WORK. Do you say, my Brothers and Sisters, that from now on your whole life shall be a service of the Lord? Then it will follow, first, that you will have to live with a single eye to His Glory. See how in verse 5 we are told, Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ? If we do, indeed, live as to the Lord, we must necessarily live wholly to the Lord.

The Lord Jesus is a most engrossing Master. He has said, No man can serve two masters, and we shall find it so. He will have everything or nothing! If, indeed, He is our Lord, He must be our only Sovereign, for He will not tolerate a rival. It comes to pass then, O Christian, that you are bound to live for Jesus and for Him alone. You must have no co-ordinate or even secondary objective or divided aimif you divide your heart, your life will be a failure. As no dog can follow two hares at one time, or he will lose both, certainly no man can follow two contrary objectives and hope to secure either of them. No, it behooves a servant of Christ to be a concentrated manhis affections should be bound up into one affectionand that affection should not be set on things on the earth, but on things above.

His heart must not be divided, or it will be said of him as of those in Hosea, Their heart is divided; now shall they be found wanting. The chamber of the heart is far too narrow to accommodate the King of kings and the world, or the flesh, or the devil at the same time. We have no wish, desire, ambition, or exertion to spare for a rival lordthe service of Jesus demands and deserves all. Such is the eminence of this objective, that all a man has or can have by reason or strength must be spent this way if he is to win. Nor is this too much for our great Lord to expect from those for whom He has done so much.

To whom should I give a part of myself, my Master? You have redeemed me wholly and I am altogether Yourstake full possession of me! Who else can be worthy of my heart? Who else can have a right to set foot within the province where You are King? No, rule alone, blessed and only Potentate! As You, alone, have redeemed me, alone treading the winepress of wrath for me, so shall You be sole Monarch of my soul! You are all my salvation and all my desire and, therefore, You shall have all my homage and service. With such a Lord to be served, the current of our life must run in only one channelthat He may have it all and none may run to waste.

Next, to do service to the Lord, we must live with holy carefulness, for what says the context? We are to serve, with fear and trembling. In the service of God we should use great care to accomplish our very best and we should feel a deep anxiety to please Him in all things. There is a trade called paper staining, in which a man flings colors upon paper to make common wall decorations. And by rapid processes acres of paper can be speedily finished. Suppose that the paper stainer should laugh at an eminent artist because he had covered such a little space, having been stippling and shading a little tiny piece of his picture by the hour together? Such ridicule would, itself, be ridiculous! Now the

worlds way of religion is the paper stainers way, the daubing waythere is plenty of it and it is quickly done.

But Gods way, the narrow way, is a careful matter. There is but little of it and it costs thought, effort, watchfulness and care. Yet see how precious is the work of art when it is done and how long it lastsand you will not wonder that a man spends his time upon it. Even so, true godliness is acceptable with God and it endures forever and, therefore, it well repays the earnest effort of the man of God. The miniature painter has to be very careful of every touch and tint, for a very little may spoil his work. Let our life be a miniature paintingwith fear and trembling let it be worked out. We are serving the thrice Holy God who will be held in reverence of them that come near to Him. Let us mind what we do.

Our blessed Master never made a faulty stroke when He was serving His Father. He never lived a careless hour, nor let drop an idle word. Oh, it was a careful life He livedeven the night watches were not without the deep anxieties which poured themselves forth in prayer unto God! And if you and I think that the first thing which comes to hand will do with which to serve our God, we make a great mistake and grossly insult His name! We must have a very low idea of His infinite majesty if we think that we can honor Him by doing His service half-heartedly, or in a slovenly style. No, if you will, indeed, live as to the Lord, and not unto man, you must watch each motion of your heart and life, or you will fail in your design. Living as to the Lord means living with a concentrated spirit and living with earnest care that our one service may be the best of which we are capable when at our best estate. Alas, how poor is that best when we reach it! Truly, when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, but even then, that all is seldom reached.

Further, if from now on our desire is to live as to the Lord, and not unto men, then what we do must be done with all our heart. In singleness of your heart, says the context. And again, in the sixth verse, As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Our work for Jesus must be the outgrowth of the soil of the heart. Our service must not be performed as a matter of routinethere must be vigor, power, freshness, reality, eagerness and warmth about itor it will be good for nothing. No fish ever came upon Gods altar because it could not come there alivethe Lord needs none of your dead, heartless worship! You know what is meant by putting all our heart into all that we doexplain it by your lives! A work which is to be accepted of the Lord must be heart-work throughoutnot a few thoughts of Christ, occasionally, and a few chill words and a few chance gifts and a little done by way of by-playbut as the heart beats so must we serve God! It must be our very life!

We are not to treat our religion as though it were a sort of weekend farm which we were willing to keep going but not to make much of, our chief thoughts being engrossed with the home farm of self and the world with its gains and pleasures. Our Lord will be aut Caesar aut nullus, either ruler or nothing! My Master is a jealous HusbandHe will not tolerate a stray thought of love elsewhere and He thinks it scorn that they who call themselves His beloved should love others better than Himself! Such unchastity of heart can never be permittedlet us not dream of it! We may not claim to be His if we give Him only lip service, brain service or hand serviceHe must have the heart!

Oh, our beloved Lord, You did not spare Your heart from agony for us! The lance opened it with all its costly double flood for our unworthy sakes! Therefore You cannot be content to receive, in return, lifeless forms and cold pretences! You did live, indeedthere was no sham about Your life. In all You did You were intense. The zeal of Your Fathers house had eaten You up. You were clad with zeal as with a cloak which covered You from head to foot. Let us live somewhat after this glorious fashion, for a servant only truly lives when he lives as his master. He that is perfect shall be as His Master. If we are to live to the Lord, the fountains of our soul must flow with boiling floods and our life must be like a great Icelandic geyser casting up its columns of water which seethe and boil as they rise.

As great earthquakes shake the very center, so must there be movements of life within us which stir our soul with vehement longings for Jesus and with intense yearnings for His Glory. All our light and life must turn to love and that love must be all on flame for Jesus. If we truly live unto Christ it must be so! What else says the passage before us? If we sayfrom now on I will do the will of God as to the Lord and not unto men, then we must do it under subjection, for note well the words, doing the will of God. Some peoples religion is only another way of doing their own will. They pick and choose what precepts they will keep and what they will neglect. They choose what doctrines they shall hold and what they shall refusetheir spirit is not bowed into sacred servitude, but takes license to act according to its own pleasure. The freedom of a Christian lies in what I will venture to call an absolute slavery to Christ! And we never become truly free till every thought is brought into subjection to the will of the Most High.

Now, if from now on I live to God, I have no longer any right to say, I will do this or that, but I must inquire, My Master, what would You have me do? As the eyes of the maidens are to their mistress, so are our eyes up to You, O Lord. Believer, your Master is to will for you from now on! It is idle to say, I shall live as to the Lord and not unto men, when all the while we intend to live in our own fashion! Which is to be master, now, self or Christ? On every point this question must be settled, for if on any point we assume the personal mastery, the rule of Jesus is wholly refused! To go or to stand still, to suffer or to be in pleasure, to be in honor or to be in disgrace is no more to be our option, or if we have a momentary choice it is to be cheerfully resigned before the Sovereignty of Him whom we have now taken to be our All in All. There is no being a Christian if Christ does not have the throne in the heart and life. It is but the mockery of Christianity to call Jesus Master and Lord while we do not do the things which He commands!

Again, we must do all this under a sense of the Divine oversight. Notice in verse 6 it is said of servants, Not with eye service, as men-pleasers. What a mean and beggarly thing it is for a man only to do his work well when he is watched! Such oversight is for boys at school and mere hirelings. You never think of watching noble-spirited men. Here is a young apprentice set to copy a picturehis master stands over him and looks

over each line, for the young rascal will grow careless and spoil his work, or take to his games if he is not well looked after. Did anybody thus dream of supervising Raphael and Michelangelo to keep them to their work? No, the master artist requires no eyes to urge him on.

Popes and emperors came to visit the great painters in their studios, but did they paint better because these grandees gazed upon them? Certainly not! Perhaps they did all the worse in the excitement or the worry of the visit. They had regard to something better than the eyes of pompous people. So the true Christian needs no eyes of man to watch him. There may be pastors and preachers who are better off for being looked after by bishops and presbyters, but fancy a bishop overseeing the work of Martin Luther and trying to quicken his zeal! Or imagine a presbyter looking after Calvin to keep him sound in the faith! Oh, no! Gracious minds outgrow the governance and stimulus which comes of the oversight of mortal man. Gods own Spirit dwells within us and we serve the Lord from an inward principle which is not fed from without.

There is about a real Christian a prevailing sense that God sees him and he does not care who else may set his eyes upon himit is enough for him that God is there. He has little respect for the eyes of man. He neither courts nor dreads them! Let the good deed remain in the dark, for God sees it and that is enough! Or let it be blazoned in the light of day to be pecked at by the censorious, for it little matters who censures, since God approves! This is to be a true servant of Christto escape from being an eye-servant to men by becoming, in the most sublime sense, an eyeservant of Godalways working beneath the eyes of God. If we did but realize this, how well we should live! If now I remember, as I try to do, that God hears each word I speak to you from this pulpitthat He reads my soul as I address you in His namehow ought I to preach?

And if you go to your Sunday school class this afternoon and picture Jesus sitting among the boys and girls and hearing how you teach them how earnestly you will teach! At home when you are about to scold a servant, or in the shop, when you think to do a rather sharp thing, if you think your Master stands there and sees it all, what a power it will have over you! Our lives should all be spent under the spell of, You see me, God, and we should each be able to declare, I have set the Lord always before me. One more thought, and it is this. If from now on we are to serve the Lord, and not men, then we must look to the Lord for our reward and not to men. Knowing, says the eighth verse, that whatever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he is bond or free.

Wages! Is that the motive of a Christian? Yes, in the highest sense, for the greatest of the saints, such as Moses, have had respect unto the recompense of the reward. And it were like despising the reward which God promises to His people if we had no respect whatever unto it. Respect unto the reward which comes of God kills the selfishness which is always expecting a reward from

men. We can postpone our reward and we can be content, instead of receiving present praise, to be misunderstood and misrepresented. We can postpone our reward and we can endure, instead of it, to be disappointed in our work and to labor on without successfor when the reward does come how glorious it will be!

An hour with Jesus will make up for a lifetime of persecution! One smile from Him will repay us a thousand times over for all disappointments and discouragements. Thus you see, Brothers and Sisters, that if we do, in very deed, make this our rule and maximAs to the Lord, and not to menour work will be shaped and fashioned most wonderfully. May God grant that the influence of this motive may manifestly sway our whole life from now on until we close it for this world and commence it anew where we shall not need to shift our course, but shall continue eternally to live to the Lord alone!

II. May the Holy Spirit guide us while we reflect, secondly, that should this text become the inspiration of our life IT WOULD GREATLY ELEVATE OUR SPIRITS. What would it do for us? First, it would lift us above all complaining about the hardness of our lot, or the difficulty of our service. Alas, says one, I am worn out! I cannot keep on at this rate. My position is so terribly trying that I cannot hold on much longerit strains not only muscle and sinew, but nerve and heart. Nobody could bear my burden long! My husband is cruel, my friends are unkind, my children are ungrateful. Ah, poor heart, there are many others who wear the weepingwillow as well as yourself!

But be of good courage and look at your case in another light. If the burden is to be borne for Jesus sake, who loved you and gave Himself for youby whose precious blood you are redeemed from the pains of Hell can you not bear it? Can you not bear it? That is quite another thing, you say. I could not bear it for a sneering master. I could not bear it for a passionate, obstinate mistress. But I could do anything and I could bear anything for Jesus. This makes all the difference

*For Him I count as gain each loss,   
Disgrace for Him, renown.   
Well may I glory in His Cross,   
While He prepares my crown!*

We are satisfied to bear any cross so long as it is His Cross! What wonders men can do when they are influenced by enthusiastic love for a leader!

Alexanders troops marched thousands of miles on foot and they would have been utterly wearied had it not been for their zeal for Alexander. He led them forth conquering and to conquer. Alexanders presence was the life of their valor, the glory of their strength. If there was a very long days march over burning sands, one thing they knewthat Alexander marched with them! If they were thirsty, they knew that he thirsted, too, for when one brought a cup of water to the king, he put it aside, thirsty as he was, and said, Give it to a sick soldier. Once it so happened that they were loaded with the spoil which they had taken and each man had become rich with goodly garments and wedges of gold. Then they began to travel very slowly with so much to carry and the king feared that he should not overtake his foe. Having a large quantity of spoil which fell to his own share, he burned it all before the eyes of his soldiers and bade them do the same that they might pursue the enemy and win even more!

Alexanders portion lies beyond, he cried! And seeing the kings own spoils on fire, his warriors were content to give up their gains, also, and share with their king. He did, himself, what he commanded others to

doin self-denial and hardship he was a full partaker with his followers. After this fashion our Lord and Master acts towards us. He says, Renounce pleasure for the good of others. Deny yourself and take up your cross. Suffer, though you might avoid it. Labor, though you might rest, when Gods Glory demands suffering or labor of you. Have not I set you an example? Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich. He stripped Himself of all things that He might clothe us with His Glory! O, Brothers and Sisters, when we heartily serve such a Leader as this, and are fired by His Spirit, then murmuring, complaining, weariness and fainting of heart are altogether gone! A Divine passion carries us beyond ourselves

*I can do all things, or can bear   
All suffering if my Lord is there.*

Next, this lifts the Christian above the spirit of laziness. I believe great numbers of working menI am not going to judge them for italways consider how little they can possibly do to earn their wages. The question with them is not, How much can we give for the wage? That used to be. But now, it is, How little can we give? How little work can we do in the day without being discharged for idleness? Many men say, We must not do all the work today, for we shall need something to do tomorrowour masters will not give us more than they can help and, therefore, we will not give them more than we are obliged to. This is the general spirit on both sides and as a nation we are going to the dogs because that spirit is among usand we shall be more and more beaten by foreign competition if this spirit is cultivated.

Among Christians such a notion cannot be tolerated in the service of our Lord Jesus. It never does for a minister to say, If I preach three times a week it is quite as much as anybody will expect of me, therefore I shall do no more. It will never be right for you to say, I am a Sunday school teacher. As long as I get to class on timesome of you do not do that and as long as I teach until the class time is over, I need not look after the boys and girls through the week. I cannot be bothered with themI will do just as much as I am bound to do, but no more. In a certain country town it was reported that the grocers wife cut a plum in two, for fear there should be a grain more than weight in the parcel. The folks called her Mrs. Split-Plum. Ah, there are many Split-Plums in religion! They do not want to do more for Jesus than may be absolutely necessary. They would like to give good weight, but they would be sorry to be convicted of doing too much.

Ah, when we get to feel we are doing service for our Lord Jesus Christ, we adopt a far more liberal scale! Then we do not calculate how much ointment will suffice for His feet, but we give Him all that our box contains. Is this your talk, Bring the scales, this ointment cost a great deal of money and we must be economical. Watch every drachma, yes, every scruple and grain, for the nard is costly? If this is your cool manner of calculation, your offering is not worth a fig! Not so spoke that daughter of love of whom we read in the Gospels, for she broke the box and poured out all the contents upon her Lord. To what purpose is this waste? cried Judas. It was Judas who thus spoke and you know, therefore, the worth of that observation! Christs servants delight to give so much as to be thought wasteful, for they feel that when they have, in the judgment of others, done extravagantly for Christ, they have but begun to show their hearts love for His dear name. Thus the elevating power of the spirit of consecration lifts us up above the wretched stinginess of mere formality.

Again, this raises us up above all boasting of our work. Is the work good enough? asked one of his servant. The man replied, Sir, it is good enough for the price and it is good enough for the man who is going to have it. Just so, and when we serve men we may, perhaps, rightly judge in that fashion. But when we come to serve Christ, is anything good enough for Him? If our zeal knew no respite. If our prayers knew no pause. If our efforts knew no relaxation. If we gave all we have of time, wealth, talent and opportunity. If we should die a martyrs death a thousand times, wouldnt He, the Best Beloved of our souls, deserve far more? Ah, that He would! Therefore is self-congratulation banished forever! When you have done all, you will feel that it is not worthy of the matchless merit of Jesus and you will be humbled at the thought! Thus, while doing all for Jesus stimulates zeal, it fosters humilitya happy blending of useful effects.

The resolve to do all as unto the Lord will elevate you above that craving for recognition which is a disease with many. It is a sad fault in many Christians that they cannot do anything unless all the world is told of it. The hen in the farm-yard has laid an egg and feels so proud of the achievement that she must cackle about iteverybody must know of that one poor egg till all the country round resounds with the news! It is so with some professorstheir work must be published or they can do no more! Here have I, said one, been teaching in the school for years and nobody ever thanked me for it! I believe that some of us who do the most are the least noticed and what a shame it is.

But if you have done your service unto the Lord you would not talk so, or we shall suspect you of having other aims! The servant of Jesus will say, I do not need human notice. I did it for my Master. He noticed me and I am content. I tried to please Him and, by His Grace, I did please Him and, therefore, I ask no more, for I have gained my end. I seek no praise of men, for I fear lest the breath of human praise should tarnish the pure silver of my service. This would lift you above the discouragement which sometimes comes of human censure. If you seek the praise of men you will, in all probability, fail in the present and certainly you will lose it in the future, sooner or later. Many men are more ready to censure than to commendand to hope for their praise is to seek for sugar in a root of wormwood.

Mans way of judging is unjust and seems fashioned on purpose to blame all of us, one way or another. Here is a Brother who sings bass and the critics say, Oh yes, a very fine bass voice, but he could not sing treble. Here is another who excels in treble and they say, Yes, yes, but we prefer a tenor. When they find a tenor they blame him because he cannot sing bass. No one can be candidly praised, but all must be savagely censured! What will the great Master say about it? Will He not judge thusI have given this man a bass voice and he sings bass and that is what I meant him to do. I gave that man a tenor voice and he sings tenor and that is what I meant him to do. I gave that man a treble voice and he

sings treble and so takes the part I meant him to take. All the parts blended together make up sweet music for My ears?

Wisdom is justified of her children, but Folly blames them all round. How little we ought to care about the opinions and criticisms of our fellow men when we remember that He who made us what we are and helps us, by His Grace, to act our part, will not judge us after the mode in which men carp or flatter, but will accept us according to the sincerity of our hearts. If we feel, I was not working for you; I was working for God, we shall not be much wounded by our neighbors remarks. The nightingale charms the ear of night. A fool passes by and declares that he hates such distracting noises! The nightingale sings on, for it never entered the little minstrels head or heart that it was singing for criticsit sings because He who created it gave it this sweet faculty! So may we reply to those who condemn usWe live not unto you, O men! We live unto our Lord. Thus do we escape the discouragements which come of ungenerous misapprehension and jealous censure.

This, too, will elevate you above the disappointments of failures , yes, even of the saddest kind. If those you seek to bless are not saved, yet you have not altogether failed, for you did not teach or preach having the winning of souls as the absolute ultimatum of your workyou did it with the view of pleasing Jesusand He is pleased with faithfulness even where it is not accompanied with success. Sincere obedience is His delight even if it leads to no apparent results. If the Lord should set His servant to plow the sea or sow the sand, He would accept his service. If we should have to witness for Christs name in the stocks and by stonesand if our hearers should be even worse than blocks of marble and should turn and tear us apartwe may still be filled with contentment, for we shall have done our Lords will and what more do we need? To plod on under apparent failure is one of the most acceptable of all works of faith and he who can do it, year after year, is assuredly well-pleasing unto God.

This lifts us above disappointment in the prospect of death . We shall have to go away from our work soon, so men tell us, and we are apt to fret about it. The truth is we shall go on with our work forever if our service is pleasing to the Lord! We shall please Him up yonder even better than we do here! And what if our enterprise here should seem to end as far as man is concerned? We have done it unto the Lord and our record is on high and, therefore, it is not lost. Nothing that is done for Jesus will be destroyedthe flower may fade, but its essence remains! The tree may fall, but its fruit is stored! The cluster may be crushed, but the wine is preserved! The work and its place may pass away, but the glory which it brought to Jesus shines as the stars forever and ever!

Yes, and this lifts us above the deadening influence of age and the infirmities which come with multiplied years. What little we can do, we do it all the more thoroughly for Jesus as our experience ripens! If we must contract the sphere, we condense and intensify the motive. If we are living unto Christ, we love Him even when our heart grows cold to other things. When the eyes grow dim earthwards, they brighten towards Heaven! When the ears can hardly hear the voice of singing men and singing women, it still knows the music of Jesus name! And when the hands can do little in human business, they begin feeling for the strings of the celestial harp that it may make melody for the Well-Beloved! I know of nothing which can possibly elevate our spirit, as workers for Christ, like the sense of doing all unto the Lord and not unto men! May the Spirit of God help us to rise into this perfect consecration!

I have not time to say more than just this word. A due sense of serving the Lord would ennoble all our service beyond conception. Think of working for Himfor HIM, the best of mastersbefore whom angels count it glory to bow! Work done for Him is, in itself, the best work that can be, for all that pleases Him must be pure and lovely, honest and of good report. Work for the eternal Father and work for Jesus are works which are good and only good! To live for Jesus is to be swayed by the noblest of motives. To live for the Incarnate God is to blend the love of God and the love of men in one passion. To live for the ever-living Christ is elevating to the soul, for its results will be most enduring. When all other work is dissolved this shall abide.

Men spoke of painting for eternity, but we, in very deed, serve for eternity. Soon shall all worlds behold the nobility of the service of Christ, for it will bring with it the most blessed of all rewards. When men look back on what they have done for their fellows, how small is the recompense of a patriotic life! The world soon forgets its benefactors. Many and many a man has been borne aloft in youth amidst the applause of men and then, in his old age, he has been left to starve into his grave. He who scattered gold at first, begs for pennies at last the world called him generous while he had something to give, but when he had bestowed all, it blamed his imprudence! He who lives for Jesus will never have ground of complaint concerning his Lord, for He forsakes not His saints.

No man has ever regretted what he did for Jesus, except that he may regret that he has not done 10 times more! The Lord will not leave His old servants. O God, You have taught me from my youth and up to now have I declared Your wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not. Such was the prayer of David and he was confident of being heard. Such may be the confidence of every servant of Christ. He may go down to his grave untroubled! He may rise and enter the dread solemnities of the eternal world without a fear, for service for Christ creates heroes to whom fear is unknown!

III. I close by saying that if we enter into the very spirit of this discourse, or even go beyond itif from now on we live only for Jesus, so as never to know pleasure apart from Him, nor to have treasure out of Him, nor honor but in His honor, nor success but in the progress of His KingdomWE SHALL EVEN THEN HAVE DONE NO MORE THAN HE DESERVES AT OUR HANDS. For, first, we are Gods creatures. For whom should a creature live but for his Creator? Secondly, we are His new creatures, we are the twice-born of Heavenshould we not live for Him by whom we have been begotten for Glory? As many as have believed in Jesus are the produce of that Divine power which raised the Son of God from the deadshall they not live in newness of life? God has taken this pains with us, that He has made us twice over and He has made a new Heaven and a new earth for us to dwell inwhom should we serve with all our mind but Him by whom we have been made anew?

Then comes in redemption. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. We dare not be selfish! We may not put self in opposition to God. But I must go furtherwe may not allow self to be at all considered apart from God. Even when it seems that self and God might both be served at the same time, it must not beself in any degree will spoil it all. We are never to be masters, but always servantsand to serve ourselves is to make ourselves masters. Turn your eyes, O my heart, to the Cross and see Him bleeding there whom Heaven adored! He is the Light of Glory, the joy and bliss of perfect spiritsand yet He dies there in pangs unutterabledies for me! O bleeding heart, my name was engraved upon You! O tortured brain, Your thoughts were all of me!

O Christ, you loved me and love me still! And that I should serve You seems but natural! That I should pray to serve with intense white-hot enthusiasm is an impulse of my life. Do you not confess it so, my Brothers and Sisters? Besides, remember you are one with Christ. Whom should the spouse serve but her Husband? Whom should the hand serve but the Head? It scarcely is service. Christ is your alter ego, your other selfno, your very selfshould you not live for Him? You are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh and, therefore, you must love Him. Let a Divine selfishness impel you to love your Lord.

No hand, I think, counts it hard to be serving his own head. Surely, it can be no hardness to do service to Him with whom we are joined by bonds and bands of vital union! He is our Head and we are His body and His fullness. Let us fill up His Glory! Let us spread abroad the praises of His name! God help us to never finish this sermon, but to begin it now and go on preaching it in our lives, world without end! For Heaven shall be in thisNot unto us, not unto us, but to Your name be praise! And the beginnings of Heaven are with us nowthe youth, the dawn of Glory, in proportion while we say from our very soulsWhether we live, we live unto the Lord. And whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lords.

And so shall it be from now on and forever! As to those that know nothing of this, seeing they know not Christ, may the Lord bring them to believe in Jesus Christ this day, that they may, through His Grace, become His servants. Amen and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONLuke 6.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK145, 660, 661. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #3143 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SHOES FOR PILGRIMS AND WARRIORS   
NO. 3143

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1909.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Ephesians 6:15.

THE Christian was evidently intended to be in motion, for here are shoes for his feet. His head is provided with a helmet, for he is to be thoughtful. His heart is covered with a breastplate, for he is to be a man of feeling. His whole nature is protected by a shield, for he is called to endurance and caution. And that he is to be active is certain, for a sword is provided for his hand to use and sandals with which his feet are to be shod. To suppose that a Christian is to be motionless as a post and inanimate as a stone, or merely pensive as a weeping willow and passive as a reed shaken by the wind, is altogether a mistake! God works in us and His Grace is the great motive power which secures our salvation, but He does not so work in us as to chloroform us into unconscious submission, or engineer us into mechanical motionHe orchestrates all our activities by working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Grace imparts healthy life and life rejoices in activity! The Lord never intended His people to be automatons worked by clockwork, or cold and dead statuesHe meant them to have life, to have it abundantlyand in the power of that life to be full of energy! It is true He makes us lie down in green pastures, but equally certain is it that He leads us onward beside the still waters! A true Believer is an active personhe has feet and uses them.

Now, he who marches meets with stones, or if as a warrior he dashes into the thick of the conflict he is assailed with weapons and, therefore, he needs to be suitably shod to meet his perils. The active and energetic Christian meets with temptations which do not happen to others. Idle persons can scarcely be said to be in dangerthey are a stage beyond that and are already overcome! Satan scarcely needs to tempt them they rather tempt him and are a fermenting mass in which sin exceedingly multipliesa decaying body around which the vultures of vice are sure to gather. But earnest laborious Believers are sure to be assailed, even as fruit bearing trees are certain to be visited by the birds. Satan cannot stand a man who earnestly serves Godhe does damage to the arch-enemys dominions and, therefore, he must be incessantly assailed. The Prince of Darkness will try, if he can, to injure the good mans character, to break his communion with God, to spoil the simplicity of his faith, to make him proud of what he is doing, or to make him despair of success. In some way or other he will, if possible, bruise the workers heel or trip him up, or lame him altogether. Because of all these dangers, Infinite Mercy has provided Gospel shoes for the Believers feetshoes of the best kindsuch as only those warriors wear who serve the Lord of Hosts!

We shall at this time first examine the shoes and then try them on. I. Our first duty is to EXAMINE THE SHOES which are provided for us by our Captain. And in doing so we are delighted to find that they come from a blessed Maker, for the feet of the Believer are to be shod with a Divine preparation. Many preparations and inventions are used for protecting feet, but this is a preparation in which infinite skill has been displayed and the same wisdom put forth as in the Gospel, which is the masterpiece of God! Every portion of the Gospel is from God and all the influence which makes it a Gospel of Peace is Hisand we are therefore thankful to find that we are to wear the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. It would not be meet that he who is helmeted with Divine Salvation should be shod with a mere human production! Having begun in the Spirit, it would be strange to be made perfect in the flesh. We would not be like the image of the monarchs dream whose head was of fine gold and whose feet were part of iron and part of clay. We rejoice that all the pieces of armor which compose our panoply come forth from the celestial Armorer whose productions are without a flaw!   
We are glad to find that the shoes are made of excellent material, for they are composed of the preparation of the Gospel of Peaceand what better material can there be than the Gospelthe Gospel of Peace and that peace which grows out of the Gospel? This is what is meant. We believe in a Gospel which was formed in the purpose of God from all eternity, designed with Infinite Wisdom, worked out at an enormous expense, costing nothing less than the blood of Jesus, brought home by Infinite Power, even by the might of the Holy Spirit! It is a Gospel full of blessings, any one of which would outweigh a world in pricea Gospel as free as it is full, a Gospel everlasting and immutable, a Gospel of which we can never think too much, whose praises we can never exaggerate! It is from this choice Gospel that its choicest essence is taken, namely, its peace. And from this peace those sandals are prepared with which a man may tread on the lion and the adder, yes, and on the fierce burning coals of malice, slander and persecution! What better shoes can our souls require?  
What matchless material for girding the pilgrims feet is that which is here mentioned, namely the peace which comes from the Gospel, the preparation of heart and life which springs of a full knowledge, reception and experience of the Gospel in our souls! What does it mean? It means, first, that a sense of perfect peace with God is the grandest thing in all the world with which to travel through life. Let a man know that his sins are forgiven him for Christs names sake, that he is reconciled to God by the death of His Son and that between him and God there is no ground of differenceand what a joyful pilgrim he becomes! When we know that as the Lord looks on us, His glance is full of infinite, undivided affection, that He sees us in Jesus Christ as cleansed from every speck of sin and as, accepted in the Beloved, and that by virtue of a complete Atonement we are forever reconciled to God, then do we march through life without fear, booted for all the exigencies of the way, yes, ready to plunge through fire and water, thorn and thistle, bush and briar without fear! A man at peace with God dreads neither the ills of life nor the terrors of death! Poverty, sickness, persecution and pain have lost their sting when sin is pardoned! What is there that a man needs to fear when he knows that in no affliction will there be any trace of the judicial anger of God, but all will come from a Fathers hand and work his lasting good! Goliath had armor of brass upon his legs, but he is better armed who wears a full assurance of peace with God through the Gospel! He shall tread down his enemies and crush them as grapes in the winepress! His shoes shall be iron and brass and, shod with them he shall stand upon the high places of the earth and his feet shall not slip. Achilles received a deadly wound in the heel, but no arrow can pierce the heel of the man whose foot is sandaled with reconciliation by atoning blood! Many a warrior has fainted on the march and dropped from the ranks exhausted, but no weariness of the way can happen to the man who is upheld by the eternal God, for his strength shall be renewed daily.   
The preparation of the Gospel of Peace here mentioned must be understood to comprehend more than the legal peace of justification by faith. If we would enjoy the fullest comfort of the well-shod pilgrim, we must have the exceeding peace which springs from intimate, undisturbed communion with God. We should pray not only to feel that we have been brought out of our natural enmity into peace with God, so as to be no more culprits but children, but also to dwell in the full joy of our new relationship. It is a sweet thing for a child of God to feel that he is so acting that his heavenly Father has no reason for walking contrary to him. You know right well that as a child of God, you will not be condemned and cast away as an alienbut you also know that as a child, you may greatly displease your Father and render it necessary for Him to frown upon you, and visit you with stripesand this you should, with the utmost diligence and prayerfulness, labor to prevent. There are times when the Lord of pilgrims hides His face from them in sore displeasure, and then it is very hard travelling. Life is a great and terrible wilderness when the Lords Presence is withdrawn. The more a man loves the Lord, the more does he suffer when there is a temporary suspension of happy communion between his soul and Heavenhe cannot be happy again till he knows that he is fully restored to the paternal favor. O child of God, you will very soon have your feet torn with the briars of the way if you do not abide in fellowship with God! When Adam had lost his oneness with God, he found out that he was naked, and so will you if you lose your communion with Jesus. Where before you dashed onward as with a charmed life, treading the world and all its cares beneath your feet, you will find yourself pierced with many sorrows, bleeding with acute griefs, scratched, torn, lacerated with trials, losses, crosses and endless annoyances. If we continue in the love of Jesus, pleasing Him in all things, jealously watching and carefully observing His will, our mind will be kept by the peace of God which passes all understandingand our road to Heaven will be a pleasant one! It may indeed be very rough in itself and in the judgment of others, but it will be so smoothed to us by the peace which reigns within that we shall glory in infirmity, exult in suffering and triumph in distress, knowing that the Lord is with us and no harm can come to us. Thus you see that the peace which comes of justification and the fuller peace which arises from enjoying the love of God are a grand preparation for our lifes journeyshoes for the feet unrivalled in excellence!   
It is also a grand sandal for a pilgrims feet when the Gospel of Peace has fully conformed his mind to the Lords will. Some children of God are not at peace with God because they do not fully acquiesce in the Divine purposes. To them the pilgrim path must be a painful one, for nothing can please themtheir self-will creates swarms of vexations for them. But to hearts which have crucified self and yielded all to the will of God, the most thorny paths are pleasant. He who can say concerning all things, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight, is shod for all ways and weathers, and may march on undismayed. Fully conformed to the Divine will, saints are invulnerable and invincible, none shall be weary nor stumble among them, neither shall the laces of their shoes be broken   
*They hold by nothing here below.   
Appoint their journey, and they go   
Through joy or grief they march the same, Triumphant still in Jesus name.*   
Surely it is when the heart is completely at one with God that the true beauty of the Christian character is seen! Then it is that the heavenly Bridegroom cries out, How beautiful are your feet with shoes, O princes daughter! Then, too, the Church in her tribulation becomes bright and glorious, like her Lord, of whom we read, His feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. Shod with perfect delight in the will of the Lord, we are able to surmount all the difficulties and trials of the way, for it becomes sweet to suffer when we see that it is the will of God. Resignation is good, but perfect acquiescence is better, and happy thrice happy is the man who feels it! No silver sandals were ever so precious, no covering of golden mail adorned with precious stones were so glorious to look upon as a mind molded to the Divine Will, perfectly in tune with the mind of the Lord Most High!

The preparation of the Gospel of Peace, you thus see, is, in many aspects, the fittest help for our journey to the promised land. And he who has his feet shod with it need not fear the flinty ways, the craggy rocks, or the thorny passes.  
But the Gospel of Peace has another side to it, for it not only brings us peace with God, but it inspires us with peace towards ourselves. Civil war is the worst of wars and for a man to be at discord with himself is the worst of strife. The worst peril of Christian pilgrimage is that which arises from the pilgrims own selfand if he is ill at ease within himself, his course cannot be a happy one. The prayer of the evening hymn is

very suggestive **That with the world,** myself **and Thee,   
I, ever I sleep, at peace may be.**

It is a most necessary matter to have peace at home. It is a cruel case for a man when his own heart condemns him. To whom shall he look for a defense when his own conscience indicts him and all his faculties turn kings evidence against him? It is to be feared that many Believers habitually do that which they would not like to be questioned upon by the rule of the Word of Godthey have to close their eyes to many passages of Scripture, or else they would be uneasy in their consciences. Brothers and Sisters, this makes wretched travelling! It is like walking through a wood with bare feet. If you cannot satisfy your own heart that you are right, you are in a sad case, indeed, and the sooner matters are altered the better. But if a man can say before the living God, I know that what I am about to do is right and whatever comes of it, I have a pure motive and the Lords sanction to sustain me in it, then he proceeds to action with a nimble tread. Such a pilgrim is girt for the roughest of ways and will hold on his way joyfully to the end. Rest of conscience shoes us right well, but a question as to the rightness of our procedure makes us barefooted.

Come what may, if we order our ways with reverent regard to the Lords commands, we shall be able to confront the future with serenity, for we shall not have to accuse ourselves of bringing ourselves into trouble by sin, or losing our joys by indulging in forbidden things. When the Believer falls into any trouble through having been zealous for God, then may he spread his complaint before God with the full expectation that He will bring him out of all his difficulties, for is it not written, The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord...none of his steps shall slide? Oh, to walk in such a way that your conscience is void of offense both towards God and towards manthen integrity and uprightness will preserve you and your goings will be established. He will keep the feet of His saints. He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

While travelling through the mazes of life, another form of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace will be of essential service to us, namely, peace with our fellow men. The Gospel of Peace leads us into the closest bonds of amity with our fellow Believers, although, alas, it is not always possible to prevent offenses arising, even with the best of them! If we cannot make all our Brothers and Sisters amiable, we are at least to be at peace on our sideand if we succeed in this, no great disagreement can arise, for it always needs two to make a quarrel. It is well to go to bed every night feeling, I have no difference in my soul with any of the members of Christs body. I wish well to everyone and love them all in my heart. This would enable us to travel in right royal style over fields which now are often stony with controversy and thorny with prejudice. Theological conflicts and ecclesiastical squabbles would utterly disappear if we were shod with the true spirit of the Gospel of Peace. An unwillingness to think harshly of any Christian is a sandal most easy to the feet, protecting it from many a thorn. Wear it in the Church, wear it in all holy service, wear it in all fellowship with Christians and you will find your way among the brethren greatly smoothed! You will win their love and esteem before long, and avoid a world of jealousy and opposition which would otherwise have impeded your course.

It is well to travel girt with this shoe of peace with all mankind. If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. It is barely possible, but aim at itand if you do not perfectly succeed, try again. Unconverted men will not love your religion, for they are carnal. That you cannot help, but you must love them, carnal as they are, and by degrees you may win them to love both you and your Lord. If they will not live peaceably with you, yet give them your love and live peaceably with them. Be not easily provoked. Bear and forbear, forgive and love on, return good for evil, seek to benefit even the most unthankful and you will travel to Heaven in the most pleasant possible manner. Hatred, envy and persecution may come, but a loving spirit materially blunts their edge and oftentimes inherits the promise, When a mans ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. If you have to feel, Now, I am going this part of the journey with the view of avenging a wrong, you will not journey pleasantly or safely! But if from the depth of your soul you can say, When Christ made peace with God for me, He made peace between me and my bitterest foe, you will march on like a hero! Travel through the world as a sincere philanthropist, with your feet shod with love to all born of woman and your course will be happy and honorable. God grant us that loving spirit which comes of free Grace and is the work of the Holy Spirit, for that is a mystic sandal which gives wings to the feet and lightens a weary road.

Having thus described these Gospel shoes, I should like to say that the feet of our Lord and Master were sandaled in this manner. He was the King of Pilgrims and to Him, the way was even rougher than it can be to us. But these were the shoes He wore and, having worn them, He counsels us to put on the same. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, He said. Always while He dwelt in this world He was in fellowship with God. He could truly say, I came down from Heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. He who sent Me is with Me. I am not alone because the Father is with Me. He always sought the good of His chosenhaving loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And as for His enemies, He had only prayers and tears for them. He was at peace with all above, around and within Him. That peaceableness of His, that wonderful serenity, was one of the marvelous points in His Character. You never find Him worried, disturbed, flustered. No, that is our infirmity because we take our shoes off and are taken by surprisebut His feet were always shodHe dwelt in perfect peace and, therefore, He was the grandest Pilgrim and the noblest Worker. We cannot need to be better shod than our Lord was! Let us sandal our hearts with His peace and we shall be royally prepared for our journey!

I may add that these shoes are such as will last all our journey through. We feel most comfortable in our old shoes, for they fit the foot so well, but they will at last wear out. These shoes of my text are old, yet always new and are like those which Israel wore in the wilderness, of which it is said, Your shoe is not waxen old upon your foot. The everlasting Gospel yields us everlasting peace! The good news from Heaven never grows stale, neither will the peace which it brings ever become like the Gibeonites old shoes and patched. The man who wears the preparation of the Gospel of Peace was comforted by it when he was young and it still cheers him in his later daysit made him a good traveler when he first set out and it will protect his last footsteps when he crosses the river Jordan and climbs the celestial hills!

Friends, are you all thus booted for your life-journey? See you well to it.   
II. We come now to our second business, LET US TRY ON THESE SHOES.   
Here our joy is great to find that they fit perfectly and need no tugging and straining to draw them on. By a miracle more strange than magic, the preparation of the Gospel of Peace suits every foot, whether it is that of a babe in Grace, or a strong man in Christ Jesus. No man can travel well, much less engage in battle successfully unless his dress is comfortable, especially that part of it which relates to the feet. And here we have the grand advantage that no foot was ever uneasy when once it had put on this shoe! Mephibosheths who have been lame in both feet even from birth have found this shoe works miracles and causes them to leap as harts upon the mountains! The Gospel of Peace helps all our infirmities, heals all the wounds of our old sins and suits itself to all our tender places. Whatever the weakness may be, the Gospel provides for it! Whatever the distress, its peace relieves it. Other shoes have their pinching places, but he who wears the preparation of the Gospel of Peace shall know no straitness of spirit, for the Gospel gives rest to our minds. Real Gospel really believed, means real peace! That which disturbs us is something alien to the Spirit of the Gospel, but the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Peace. Who would not wear such a shoe?   
The preparation of the Gospel of Peace is a wonderful shoe for giving its wearer a firm foothold. Surely it was of this shoe that Habakkuk sang when he said, The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places. When persons are on slippery rocks, or dangerous eminences, where a fall would be fatal, it is well to be so shod that the feet get grip and hold. Nothing aids a man to stand fast in the Lord like the peace of the Gospel. Many professors are very soon thrown overthey are attacked with doctrinal error and they readily yield. They are assailed by temptation and their feet go out from under them. But the man who has perfect peace with God and who relies upon the Most High shall never be moved, for the Lord upholds him. His shoes have driven themselves into the eternal Truths of God and hold like anchors! Tell him the Atonement is not true, preach up to him the bloodless neology of modern thought and he ridicules the ineffectual attempt because he knows whom he has believed and feels a heavenly peace within flowing from the substitutionary Sacrifice. Tell him that the Doctrines of Grace are a mistake, that salvation is all of free will and mans merit, and he says, No, I know better. I know the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace to be true by experience, I know I am Gods chosen, I know that I am called, I know that I am justified, for I know that I have peace with God as the result of all these. You cannot move him an inch! His creed is interwoven with his personal consciousness and there is no arguing him out of it! In these days of skepticism, when no man seems to have any resting place, it is well to be so shod that you can and do stand on the Truth and cannot be blown about like thistledown in the breeze.

The shoe of our text is equally famous for its suitability for marching in the ways of daily duty. Soldiers have little time for contemplating the comfort of their shoes, or their fitness for mere standing, for they have daily marching to perform. We, too, have our marching, and as far as some of us are concerned, they are no mere parades, but heavy marching involving stern toil and protracted effort. A soul at perfect peace with God is in a fit state for the severest movements. A sense of pardoned sin and reconciliation with God fits us for anything and everything. When the burden of sin is gone, all other burdens are light. Since we are no longer on the road to Hell, the roughest places of our pilgrimage do not distress us. In every sphere, a heart at perfect peace with God is the soundest preparation for progress and the surest support under trials. Try on these shoes, my Brothers and Sisters, and see if they do not enable you to run without weariness and walk without fainting. All earth cannot find their likethey are unrivalledthey make men like the angels to whom duty is delight!   
These Gospel shoes are also an effectual preservative from all the ordinary roughness of the road of life, although to most of us it is far from smooth. He who expects to find a grassy walk all the way to Heaven, well mown and rolled, or looks for a highway leveled by a steam-roller, will be sorrowfully mistaken. The way is rugged, like the goat tracks of Engedi, and oftentimes so narrow and so far on high that the eagles eye cannot discern it! The blood of former pilgrims stains the way to Glory, yet from all perils to our feet, the preparation of the Gospel of Peace will guard us! From fears within and fighting without, Gospel peace will surely deliver us. Perhaps we are more vexed with little trials than with great ones certainly we bear them with far less equanimitybut a peaceful heart protects alike from tiny thorns and terrible rocks. Everyday vexations as well as extraordinary tribulations we shall bear cheerfully when the Peace of God keeps our heart and mind!   
Beloved, this shoe is also good for climbing. Do you ever practice the holy art of spiritual climbing, Gods blessed Spirit leading the way? Do you ever climb Mount Tabor to be transfigured with your Master? Have you watched with Him one hour and seen His conflict and His victory? Have you ever looked from Pisgahs glorious heights upon the goodly land and Lebanon, anticipating the glory to be revealed? Has your spirit ever been away there alone in mysterious communing with God upon the Hermons? I trust you know what climbing work means and that you have enjoyed rapt ecstatic fellowship with Jesus Christ. But of this I am sure, you can never mount on high if your feet are not shod with the Peace of God! Unshod with these sacred sandals, there is no climbing! Only those who delight themselves in the Lord God shall ascend the Hill of the Lord and stand in His Holy Place!   
The heart prepared by peace with God is shod suitably for running as well as for climbing. There are periods when all our energies must be put forth and we must rush forward at the heroic pace, for, at certain passages in lifes campaign, things must be carried by storm and every faculty must dash forward at its swiftest speed. We cannot at all times keep up the swiftness, which, nevertheless, is occasionally required of us, but the man for a push and a dash is he whose soul abides in peace. Troubled in heart, our feet are blistered, our knees are weak and our movements are painfully slow. But the joy of the Lord is our strength and in the power of it we become like Asahel, fleet of foot as a young roe. Try on these shoes, my limping Brothers and Sisters! What do you say?   
Lastly, this shoe is good for fighting, and that I gather from Paul having put it among the armor. In the old style, fighting meant hand to hand and foot to foot, and then it was necessary for the feet to be well protected and, indeed, so well covered over as to be useful in assault, for the warriors kicked with their feet as well as struck with their handsand many a foe was placed hors de combat with a heavy kick! Christians are expected to fight with their feet in the battle against sin and Satan! Indeed, they must fight with all their powers and faculties! That grand promise has been given to us, The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. What a tread we will give him when we once have the opportunity! We shall need to have our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace to break that old dragons head and grind his snares to powder! And God helping us, we shall do it! Our Covenant Head has trampled on the old serpent and so shall all His members.   
Let this suffice concerning these shoes, but a serious question suggests itself to me. Are there not some of you who have to travel to eternity and yet have no shoes for the journey? How can the unconverted man hope to reach Heaven when he has no shoes on his feet? How will he bear the troubles of life, the temptations of the flesh and the trials of death? I pray you, unconverted ones, look at yourselves and at the way and see how impossible it is for you to accomplish the journey unless you go to Jesus and obtain from Him the Grace which will make you pilgrims to Glory! Go, I pray you, and find peace in Himand then your life-journey shall be happy and safe, and the end eternal joyfor your feet will be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**EPHESIANS 6:10-24.**

Verse 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Everything depends upon that. Whether you are called upon to work, or to wait, or to watch, or to suffer, you have need to be strong. If you are not strong, the very armor that you wear will be a burden to you! It is of the utmost importance that Christians should be as strong in Grace as they can possibly be. And the power that is to be in them is to be the power of Godthe power of His might. What a wonderful power that is! The power of flesh is weakness and the power of man is fading, but the power of God is almighty and unchangeable! And if we can be girt about with this power, there is scarcely any limit to what we may successfully attempt.

Finallyas if this were a matter of the highest importance, to be considered first and lastFinally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. You know how strong Paul washe was a veritable giant for Christ and he here calls upon his brethren to be as he was. He did not want to be brother to dwarfs, so he appealed to his brethren to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

11. Put on the whole armor of God. The armor of God will not serve you unless you, yourself, are strong. It needs a strong man to carry girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet and sword. Let me impress upon you the fact that we must first of all get strong within and after that, put on the whole armor of God, that armor which God has provided for the good soldiers of Jesus Christthat armor which distinguishes men as belonging to the army of God. Do not merely put on a part of it, but put on the whole of it! Do not simply look at the armor and clean it up so as to keep it bright, but put it on, wear itit is meant for you to use in the great battle for the right against the wrong! Put on the whole armor of God.

11. That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He will attack you sometimes by force and sometimes by fraud. By might or by sleight he will seek to overcome you and no unarmed man can stand against him. Never go out without all your armor on, for you can never tell where you may meet the devil. He is not omnipresent, but nobody can tell where he is not, for he and his troops of devils appear to be found everywhere on this earth.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Our great fight is not against our fellow men. As Christians, we go not forth armed with sword and shield to fight against flesh and blood.

12. But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our battle is against evil wherever it is to be found, against evil in every shape and form. Evil is as much in the world today as it was in Pauls time and we must fight against it everywhere. We are not to shut our eyes to it, or try to patch up a compromise with it. Christians are bound to fight against evil principalities, evil powers, the evil rulers of the darkness of this worldand wicked spirits in high places.

13. Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God. What stress the Apostle lays upon this point! He repeats the command he had just given and again emphasizes the fact that it is the whole armor of God that is to be worn. There are some professing Christians who only in part obey the injunction given herebut it is no use to wear a part of the Christian armor and to leave the rest of the soul unarmed. A little leak will sink a ship and the absence of one piece of the armor of God may cost a man his soul! Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God.

13. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. That is what we have to doto keep our place and our standing as Christians right to the end. To be apparently pure and holy for a time is no use at all. Transient professors will find everlasting ruin, but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. We are in Gods army for lifewe can never quit this warfare till God shall call us home!

14. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with Truth. Let this girdle of the everlasting Truth of God brace you up. Let it tighten all the rest of your armor.

14. And having on the breastplate of righteousness. Let your heart be guarded by the knowledge that you are right with Godthat you love that which is holy and true. Put on the righteousness of Christ, Himself, as the best possible protection for your heart.

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Rough roads grow smooth when these blessed Gospel sandals are on your feet. A little stone in the shoe will make the pilgrims progress a very wearisome and painful one, so try to keep out all the stoneseverything about which you have any scruple, or that you think may be wrongand walk in the safe and narrow way set forth in the Gospel of Peace.

16. Above all. Over all, covering all from head to foot.   
16. Taking the shield of faith. [See Sermon #416, Volume 7SHIELD OF FAITH Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] For you

need this shield to protect both your armor and yourself.   
16. Therewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the   
wicked. Not only the fiery darts of the Wicked One, but those, also, of  
wicked men and wicked women who may throw at you afar, darts that   
are all ablaze which would burn as well as pierce you if you were not well  
guarded against them. Nothing can quench these fiery darts but the   
shield of faith!   
17. And take the helmet of salvation. You used to wear the helmet of   
pride with its fine nodding plumes, but that has been taken off of you   
long ago. Now put on the helmet of Salvation. This will effectually defend your head and no sword will be able to cleave through it to injure   
you. Your brain and everything that is connected with your mental powers will be right when you know that you are savedand when the power  
of Gods salvation is working within you!   
17. And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. [See Sermon

#2201, Volume 37THE SWORD OF THE SPIRITRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There is no sword like that! It pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nothing can resist the Word of God if it is only wielded aright. There is one more weapon in the heavenly armory.

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. When you cannot use your sword, and even when you can hardly grasp your shield, you can pray. That weapon of all prayer is of the handiest kind because it can be turned in any and every direction. Praying always with all prayergroaning prayers, weeping prayers, prayers that are made up of single words, prayers that have not a word in them, prayers for others, prayers of confession, prayers of thanksgivingpraying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

18. And watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. But will prayer for other people help us? Yes, very much! You will sometimes find that when you cannot pray for yourself, it is a good plan to pray for somebody else. Think of some child of God and pray for him or herand then the fire of supplication will soon burn up in your heart! The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends and He will do the same for you. I have heard many of our members say that when they have felt bound in prayer, they have pleaded for their Pastor and afterwards they have been able to pray for themselves. I advise more of you to try that planit will do me good and then if it also does you good, there will be a double advantage in it! Paul was of the same mind as I am, for he added.

19, 20. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds. An ambassador in bonds! Such a thing was never heard of in earthly courts! We never think of chaining an ambassador, but this is how men treated this great messenger from the court of Heaven!

20-22. That therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. But that you also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that you might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. It is well for Christian people to know how it fares with their spiritual guides. Paul wished the Ephesian saints to know in what state of heart he found himselfthat they might the more intelligently pray for him.

23, 24. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. I am sure that we can heartily repeat that benediction. May the Lord send much of His Grace to all His people in every part of the earth who love Him in sincerity! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #416 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SHIELD OF FAITH   
NO. 416

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Ephesians 6:16.

LIKE the Spartans, every Christian is born a warrior. It is his destiny to be assaulted. It is his duty to attack. Part of his life will be occupied with defensive warfare. He will have to defend earnestly the faith once delivered to the saints. He will have to resist the devil, he will have to stand against all his wilesand having done all, still to stand. He will, however, be but a sorry Christian if he acts only on the defensive. He must be one who goes against his foes as well as stands still to receive their advance. He must be able to say with David, I come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied.

He must wrestle not with flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. He must have weapons for his warfarenot carnalbut mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. He must not, I say, be content to live in the stronghold though he is then well guarded and munitions of stupendous strength his dwelling place may be. But he must go forth to attack the castles of the enemy and to put them down, to drive the Canaanite out of the land.

Now, there are many ways in which the Christian may to a great degree forget his marshal character. And alas, there are not a few who, if they are Christians at all, certainly know but very little of that daily warfare to which the Captain of our salvation calls His disciples. They will know most of fighting who cleave closest to king David. They who are willing not merely to be with him when he is in Sauls court with his fingers amid the strings of the harp, but going in and out before the people and behaving discreetly, so that all Israel and Judah loved David because he went out and came in before them.

They must be men who are willing to go with David into the cave of Adullam when he is outlawed, when his character has become a stench in the nostrils of every proud hypocrite and when Saul the kingin his day the representative of that worldly religion which is not of God, but stands in the strength of manwhen he hunts David to seek his life. Thus the men who are willing to follow Christ in the midst of an ungodly and perverse generation must come right out from it and be separate. Their life will have to be like the life of the men of Napthali who hazarded their lives onto the death in the high places of the field.

You will remember that Jonathan, one of the sweetest characters in the Word of God, is one of whom, after all, there is little to be said. His life was inglorious from the very time that he forsook David and his death was among the slain of the Philistines upon the dewless mountains of Gilboa. Alas, poor Jonathanhe could give David his bowbut he could not draw the bow for David. He could give David his garments, even to his armor

but he could not put on the armor for David. The attraction of his fathers court was too much for him and there he stayed.

In that Book of the Chronicles, where the Holy Spirit has recorded the names of the mighty men that were with David in Adullam we find not the name of Jonathan. We find the names of those who broke through the Philistines to give David a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem. We find the name of the man who went down into the pit in the time of winter and smote the lion. But Jonathan has not the honor to stand recorded in the list of the great host which was like the host of God. And there are Christians of that kind nowadays. They have a soft religionreligion which shuns opposition, a reed-like religion which bows before every blastunlike that cedar of godliness which stands aloft in the midst of the storm and claps its boughs in the hurricane for very joy of triumph, though the earth be all in arms abroad.

Such men, like those who shunned David in Adullam, lack the faith that shares the glory. Though saved, yet their names shall not be found written among the mighty men who for our Great Commanders sake are willing to suffer the loss of all things and to go forth without the camp bearing His reproach. Those Christians too, who having come clean out from the worlddiligently engaged in building up the Churchwill have to fight more than others who are rather built up than builders.

You remember, in Nehemiahs day, how the Jews worked when they built the walls of Jerusalem. With one hand they held the trowel and in the other they held a weapon. The builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side and so built. Moreover there were master masons along the wall and the laborers all actually worked. But here and there you might see a sentinel ready to sound the trumpet so that the workmen might prove warriors and rush to the fray and drive away their foes.

Be very diligent in doing good to the Church of Christ and you shall soon have reason to defend your cause. Serve your Master zealously and diligently and let the Lords blessing rest upon your labors, the Lords blessing will entail Satans curse, the smile of God will necessarily incur the frown of man. According to your nonconformity to the world, your daring to be singularwhen to be singular is to be rightaccording to your diligence in building up the wall of Jerusalem, you shall be compelled to recognize your soldierly character. To you the text shall come with greater emphasis than to more cowardly souls. Above all, take the shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Having treated the character of the persons who will most require the shield provided in the text, let us proceed at once to discuss the words before us. We will do so thus. First, let us expound the comparison. Secondly, enforce the exhortation. And thirdly, propound it as a word of comfort to any trembling sinners who are now specially attacked with the faith of the fiery darts of the wicked.

I. First, then, let us EXPOUND THE METAPHOR. Faith is here compared to a shield. There are four or five particulars in which we may liken faith to a shield.

The natural idea which lies upon the very surface of the simile is that faith, like a shield, protects us against attack. Different kinds of shields were used by the ancients but there is a special reference in our text to the large shield which was sometimes employed. I believe the word which is translated shield, sometimes signifies a door, because their shields were as large as a door. They covered the man entirely. You remember that verse in the Psalms which exactly has the idea, You, Lord will bless the righteous, with favor will You compass him as with a shield.

As the shield enveloped the entire man, so, we think faith envelopes the entire man and protects him from all missiles wherever they may be aimed against him. You will remember the cry of the Spartan mother to her son when he went out to battle. She said, Take care that you return with your shield, or upon it. Now, as she meant that he could return upon his shield dead, it shows that they often employed shields which were large enough to be a bier for a dead man and consequently quite large enough to cover the body of a well man. Such a shield as that is meant in the text. That is the illustration before us.

Faith protects the whole man. Let the assault of Satan be against the head, let him try to deceive us with unsettled notions in theology, let him tempt us to doubt those things which are verily received among us. A full faith in Christ preserves us against dangerous heresies and enables us to hold fast those things which we have received, which we have been taught and have learned and have made our own by experience. Unsettledness in notion generally springs from a weakness of faith. A man that has strong faith in Christ has got a hand with such a grip on the doctrines of grace that you could not unclasp it.

He knows what he has believed. He understands what he has received. He could not and would not give up what he knows to be the Truth of God, though all the schemes that men devise should assail him with their most treacherous art. While faith will guard the head, it will also guard the heart. When temptation to love the world comes in, then faith holds up thoughts of the future and confidence of the reward that awaits the people of God. Faith enables the Christian to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt and so the heart is protected.

Then when the enemy makes his cut at the sword-arm of a Christian, to disable him if possible from future service, faith protects the arm like a shield. And he is able to do exploits for his Master and go forth, still conquering and to conquer, in the name of Him that has loved us. Suppose the arrow is aimed at his feetthe enemy attempts to make him trip in his daily lifeendeavors to mislead him in the uprightness of his walk and conversation? Faith protects his feet and he stands fast in slippery places. Neither does his foot skip, nor can the enemy triumph over him.

Or suppose the arrow is aimed at the knee and Satan seeks to make him weak in prayer and tells him that God will shut out his cry and never listen to the voice of his supplication? Then faith protects him and in the power of faith, with confidence, he has access to God and draws near unto His Mercy Seat. Or let the arrow be aimed at his conscience and let it be winged with the remembrance of some recent sin. Yet faith protects the conscience, for its full assurance of atonement quenches the fiery darts with that delightful text, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.

So there is no part of a man which is not secure. Although Satan will certainly attack him in every directionlet him come where he will   
*He that has made his refuge God,*

*Shall find a most secure abode.*  
Nor does faith only protect the whole man, but if you will think for a moment you will see that the Apostle suggests the idea that it protects his armor, too. After not counting various pieces, he says, Above all. The man of God is to put on the girdle and the breastplate and he is to be shod and he is to wear his helmet. But though these are all armor, yet faith is an armor for his armor. It is not only a defense for him but a defense for his defenses. Thus faith not only shields the man but shields his graces, too.

You may easily perceive how this is. Satan sometimes attacks our sincerity. He tries to cut the girdle of Truth which is about our loins. But faith enables us to be all sincere, like Moses who forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king and refused to be called the son of Pharaohs daughter. Then the enemy will often make an attack against our righteousness and try to batter our breast-plate. Yet does faith come in and enable us like Joseph to exclaim, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God. Or like Job we cry, Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.

Or like David we can cry, even in the worst of slanders, You Lord that delivered me out of the jaw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. You see how faith guards the breast-plate and protects the girdle? All our virtues are unable to live of themselvesthey need grace to preserve them and that grace is given us through faith. Are you meek? Cover your meekness with faith, or else you will give way to a hasty speech. Are you full of decision? Let your decision be shielded with confidence in God or else your decision may waver and your firmness may give way.

Have you the spirit of love and gentleness? Take care that you have the shield of faith, or your gentleness may yet turn to anger and your love be changed to bitterness. We must protect our graces with faith as well as the nature they adorn. It is not simply the head but the helmet, not the feet merely, but the shoes. Not the loins, but the bladeall must be shielded and secured by this all-covering, all-protecting, all-triumphant shield of faith.

In the second place, let me suggest that faith like a shield receives the blows which are meant for the man himself. Some Christians think that faith would enable them to escape blowsthat if they had faith everything would be quiet, everything would be peaceful and calm. I know how young Christians imagine this. They think as soon as ever they have come out of their first convictions of their own sinfulness and found the Savior, oh, now they are going to ride softly to Heaven, singing all the way. Why did they put their armor on at all if there were to be no battles? Why have they put their hand to the plow if they are not to plow to the end of the furrow and often to wipe the sweat from their face through their hard toil?

Why enlist, young men, if you are not wanted to fight? What is the good of a fair-weather soldierone who stays at home to feed at the public expense? No, let the soldier be ready when war comes. Let him expect the conflict as a part and necessary consequence of his profession. But be armed with faithit receives the blows. The poor shield is knocked and hammered and battered like a hen house exposed in the time of storm. Blow after blow comes rattling upon it and though it turns death aside, yet the shield is competent itself to bear the cut and the thrust.

So must our faith doit must be cut at, it must bear the blows. Some people, instead of using the shield of faith to bear the blow, use the skulking place of cowards. Ashamed of Christ they make no profession of Him or having professed Christ, ashamed of the professionthey hide themselves by deserting their colors, by conformity to the world. Perhaps they are even called to preach the Gospel but they do it in so quiet and gentle a waylike men that wear soft raiment and ought to be in kings houses. Unlike John the Baptist, they are reeds shaken with the wind.

Of them no one says anything ill because they have done no ill to Satans kingdom. Against them Satan never roarswhy should he? He is not afraid of them, therefore he need not come out against them. Let them alone, he says, thousands such as those will never shake my kingdom. But this is not to use the shield of faith. This, I repeat it, is to use the sulking-places of an ignoble coward. Others use the shield of presumption. They think it is right with them when it is not. They are proof, not against the attacks of Satan, but against the weapons of our spiritual warfare.

Seared in their conscience as with a hot iron they fear not the rebukes of Gods Law. Deadened even to the voice of love they bow not before the invitations of Christ. They go on their way caring for none of those things. Presumption has made them secure. Such people have no blows to suffer. Their shield lets them go through the world quietly, saying, Peace, peace, where there is no peace. But only uplift the shield of faith, bearing the blood-red emblem of the Cross and there are plenty of the knights of Hell who are ready to unhorse you. On, Champion, on! In the name of Him that is with you. No lance can pierce that shield. No sword shall ever be able to cut through it. It shall preserve you in all battle and in all strife you shall bring it home yourselfthrough it you shall be more than conqueror. Faith, then, is like a shield because it has to bear the blows.

Thirdly, faith is like a shield because it has good need to be strong. A man who has some pasteboard shield may lift it up against his foethe sword will go through it and reach his heart. Or perhaps in the moment when the lance is in rest and his foe is dashing upon him he thinks that his shield may preserve himand lo it is dashed to shivers and the blood gushes from the fountain and he is slain. He that would use a shield must take care that it be a shield of

proof. He that has true faith, the faith of Gods elect, has such a shield that he will see the swords of his enemies go to a thousand shivers over it every time they smite the shield of faith.

And as for their spears, if they but once come in contact with this shield, they will break into a thousand splinters, or bend like reeds when pressed against the wallthey cannot pierce it, but they shall themselves be quenched or broken in pieces. You will say, how then are we to know whether our faith is a right faith and our shield a strong one? One test of it is it must be all of one piece. A shield that is made of three or four pieces in this case will be of no use. So your faith must be all of one pieceit must be faith in the finished work of Christ. You must have no confidence in yourself or in any man but rest wholly and entirely upon

Christ else your shield will be of no use.

Then your faith must be of Heavens forging or your shield will certainly fail you. You must have the faith of Gods elect which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit who works it in the soul of man. Then you must see to it that your faith is that which rests only upon Truth, for if there is any error or false notion in the fashioning of itthat shall be a joint in it which the spear can pierce. You must take care that your faith is agreeable to Gods Wordthat you depend upon true and real promises, upon the sure word of testimonyand not upon the fictions and fancies and dreams of men.

And above all, you must mind that your faith is fixed in the Person of Christnothing but a faith in Christs divine Person as God over all, blessed forever and in His proper manhood when as the Lamb of Gods Passover He was sacrificed for usno other faith will be able to stand against the tremendous shocks and the innumerable attacks which you must receive in the great battle of spiritual life. Look to your shield, Man. Not so fast there with that painted God! Not so fast there with that proud heraldic symbol which has no strength in it. See to your shield! See if it is like the shields of Solomon which were borne before the king, each one made of gold. Or at least let them be like the shields of Rehoboam, every one of the best brass, so that there be found no wooden shield in your hand which may be dashed in pieces when you need its help most.

But to pass onfor we must not pause long on any one particular faith is like a shield because it is of no use except it is well handled. A shield needs handling and so does faith. He was a silly soldier who, when he went into the battle said he had a shield but it was at home. So there are some silly professors who have a faith but they have not got it with them when they need it. They have it with them when there are no enemies. When all goes well with them, then they can believe. But just when the pinch comes, then their faith fails.

Now there is a sacred art in being able to handle the shield of faith. Let me explain to you how that can be. You will handle it well if you are able to quote the promises of God against the attacks of your enemy. The devil says, One day you shall be poor and starve. No, says the believer, handling his shield well, He has said I will never leave you, nor forsake you. He has said, Bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure. Yes, says Satan, but you will one day fall by the hand of the enemy. No, says faith, for I am persuaded that He that has begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Yes, says Satan, but the slander of the enemy will overturn you. No, says faith, He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. The remainder of wrath does He restrain. Yes says Satan, as he shoots another arrow, you are weak. Yes, says faith, handling his shield, but my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Yes, says Satan, but your sin is great. Yes, says faith, handling the promise, but He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

But, says the enemy again, drawing his sword and thrusting, God has cast you off. No, says faith, He hates putting away, He does not cast off His people, neither does He forsake His heritage. But I will have you, after all, says Satan. No, says faith, dashing the enemys jaws, He has said, I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. This is what I call handling the shield.

But there is another way of handling it, not merely with the promises, but with the doctrines. Ah, says Satan, what is there in you that you should be saved? You are poor and weak and mean and foolish! Up comes faith handling the shield doctrinally, this time and says, God has chosen the base things of this world and things which are despised has God chosen, yes and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, for not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?

Yes, says Satan, if God should have chosen you, yet after all you may certainly perish! And then, Christian handling his shield of faith doctrinally again, says No, I believe in the final perseverance of the saints, for is it not written, the righteous shall hold on His way and he that has clean hands shall wax stronger ? Those that You gave Me I have kept and none of them is lost, and so forth. So by well understanding the doctrines of grace there is not a single doctrine which may not in its way minister to our defense against the fiery darts of the wicked.

Then the Christian soldier ought to know how to handle the shield of faith according to the rules of observation. Yes, says the enemy, your confidence is vain and your hope shall soon be cut off. No, says faith, I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken. Yes, but you have fallen into sin and God will leave you. No, says faith, for I saw David and he stumbled, but yet the Lord surely brought him out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. To use this shield in the way of observation is very profitable when you mark the way whereby God has dealt with the rest of His people. For as He deals with one, so He will deal with the rest and you can throw this in the teeth of your enemy.

I remember the ways of God. I call to remembrance his deeds of old. I say has God cast off His people, has He forsaken one of His chosen? And since He has never done so, I hold up my shield with great courage and say He never will. He changes not. As He has not forsaken any, He will not forsake me.

Then there is another blessed way of handling this shield and that is experimentally. When you can look back, like the Psalmist, to the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. When you can return to those days of old and call to remembrance your song in the night. When your spirit can say, Why are you cast down, O my soul, why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him. Why, Brethren, some of us can talk of deliverances so many that we know not where to end, scarcely do we know where to begin. Oh, what wonders has God done for us as a Church and people! He has brought us through

fire and through water.

Men did ride over our heads, but up to now all things have worked together for our good. His glory has appeared amidst all the villainies and slanders of men to which we have been exposed. Let us handle our shield, then, according to the rules of past experience! And when Satan tells us that God will fail us at the last, let us reply, Now you lie and I tell it to you to your face, for what our God was in the past, He will be in the present and in the future and so on even to the end. Young soldiers of Christ, learn well the art of handling your shield.

Lastly for the matter of the figure. The shield in olden times was an emblem of the warriors honor and more especially in later days than those of Paul. In the age of chivalry, the warrior carried his escutcheon, his shield. Now, faith is like a shield, because it carries the Christians glory, the Christians coat of arms, the Christians escutcheon. And what is the Christians coat of arms? Well, good Joseph Irons used to say it was a Cross and a crown, with the words No Cross, no crowna most blessed coat of arms, too.

But methinks the Christians best coat of arms is the Cross of his Saviorthat bloodied Cross. Always stained, yet never stained. Always dyed in blood, yet always resplendent with ruby brightness. Always trod on, yet always triumphant. Always despised, yet always glorified. Always attacked, yet always without resistance, coming off more than conqueror. Some of the old Reformers used to have an anvil for their coat of arms and a significant one, too, with this motto, The anvil has broken many hammers. By which they meant that they stood still and just let men hammer at them till their hammers broke of themselves.

Another old coat of arms with some of the Reformers was likely to be a candle with a great many enemies all puffing to blow it out. Although they all blew as hard as they could, yet the candle did but burn the brighter. Out of darkness came light and from all their attacks the light grew stronger. This morning put your coat of arms upon your shield and lift it up. Let that blood-red Cross be your choice. Then when your battle is over, they will hang your escutcheon up in Heaven. And when the old heraldries have gone and the lions and tigers and beasts and all manner of strange things have vanished from remembrance, that Cross and your old shield indented with many a blow shall be honorable with many a triumph before the Throne of God. Above all things, then, take the shield of faith.

II. I now leave the expounding of the figure in haste and pass on to ENFORCE THE EXHORTATION.   
Above all taking the shield of faith. If you sent a servant upon an errand and you said to him, Get so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so, but above all now see to such-and-such a thing, he would not understand that he should not neglect any. He would perceive that there was some extra importance attached to one part of his mission. So let it be with us. We are not to neglect our sincerity, our righteousness, or our peacebut above all, as the most important, we are to see to it that our faith is rightthat it is true faith and that it covers all our virtues from attack. The necessity of true faith is clearly explained by the text.

Faith is here said to have a quenching power. The ancients were likely to use small arrows, perhaps light cane arrows which were tinged with poison. They would be called fiery darts, because they no sooner touched the flesh or even graced the skin than they left a fiery poison in the veins. Sometimes, too, they employed darts which were tipped with tow that had been dipped in some inflammable spirit and were blazing as they flew through the air in order to set the tents of their antagonists on fire, or burn down houses in besieged cities. Now faith has a quenching powerit sees the temptation or the blasphemy, or the insinuation coming against it with poison and with fire in it to take away its life or to burn up its comforts.   
Faith catches the dartnot only receives itbut takes away its sting and quenches the fire. Oh it is wonderful how God sometimes enables His people to live in the midst of temptations and tribulations as though they had none of them! I believe that some of the martyrs, when they were burned in the fire, suffered hardly any pain because the joy and peace which God gave them delivered them from the vehement heat. This I know. There are times when everybody is speaking well of some of us and we are wretched by reason of the worlds fawning. We do not want to be called Son of Pharaohs daughter.   
And yet there are other times when, though every one speaks ill, our peace is like a river and our righteousness like the waves of the sea. Truly at such times we can say, Now I am in my proper place. This is where I should beoutside the camp bearing the reproach of Christ. The praise of man is deadly and damnable. His censure is goodly and godlike. Let it come. It cannot dishonor, it does but ennoble. Thus does it often happen that faith quenches the fire of attack. No, moreit turns the attack itself into comfort, extracts honey from the nettle and sweets of joy from the wormwood and the gall. Above all, take the shield of faith.   
Another commendation which the text gives is thisthat faith alone, out of all the pieces of armor, is able to quench all the darts. The helmet can only keep off those that are aimed against the head. The foot is only and alone protected by the sandals. The breast alone is guarded by the breastplates, but faith protects against all attacks. Have all other virtues, but most of all have faith, for faith is the cure-all, it is the universal remedy. It is good not only for the heat of fever, but for the shaking of fever. It is good for everythinggood for the timid to make them strong. Good for the rash to make them wise. It is good for those who are desponding to make them brave and good for those who are too daring, to make them discreet. There is no respect in which faith is not useful to us. Therefore, whatever you leave out, see to your faith. If you forget all besides, be careful above all that you take the shield of faith.   
And then, again, we are told above all to take the shield of faith because faith preserves from all sorts of enemies. The fiery darts of the wicked! Does that refer to Satan? Faith answers him. Does it refer to wicked men? Faith resists them. Does it refer to ones own wicked self? Faith can overcome that. Does it refer to the whole world? This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. It matters not who the enemy may be let the earth be all in arms abroadthis faith can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Above all then, take the shield of faith.   
I know there are some ministers who seem to teach doubting as a duty. I cannot. I dare not. Above all, take the shield of faith. You know in the old Grecian contest the aim of the enemy was to get near enough to push aside the shield and then to stab under the armor. And that is what Satan wants to do. If he can knock aside the shield and get under it, then he can stab us mortally. Take care of your shield. Do not fight in perpetual unbelief. Be not always cast down. Pray unto your God till you can sayI know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.   
Oh, the old saints were not always doubting. My Beloved is mine and I am His, said Solomon. David saidSay unto my soul, I am your salvation. The Lord is my salvation. The Lord is my shepherd. Job, too, could say, I know that my Redeemer lives. Paul could speak very confidently in many places. And why should we be content to sayI hope, I trustwhen they said they knew and were persuaded all was well between God and their souls? Let it be so with us. Unbelief dishonors us, weakens us, destroys our comforts, prevents our usefulness. Faith will make us happy and make us useful and what is best of all, it will enable us to honor God on earth and to enjoy His presence while yet we are in the low-lands of this present world.   
III. Lastly, I have a word or two to say by way of conclusion to some POOR SINNER WHO IS COMING TO CHRIST BUT WHO IS GREATLY VEXED WITH THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE.   
You remember how John Bunyan in his Pilgrims Progress represents Christiana and Mercy and the children coming to knock at the gate? When they knocked, the enemy who lived in a castle hard by sent out a big dog which barked at them at such a rate that Mercy fainted and Christiana only dared to knock again. And when she obtained entrance, she was all in a tremble. At the same time, hard by in the castle there were men who shot fiery darts at all who would enter. And poor Mercy was exceedingly afraid because of the darts and the dog.   
Now it generally happens that when a soul is coming to Christ the devil will dog him. As sure as ever he feels his need of a Savior and is ready to put his trust in Christ, it will be true of him as of the poor demoniac child. As he was a coming the devil threw him down and beat him. Now, poor tempted Sinner, there is nothing that can bring joy and peace into your heart but faith. Oh, that you may have grace this morning to begin to use this shield. Ah Sir, you say, I have been looking within and I cannot see anything that is good. I have been looking to my experiences and I am afraid I have never felt as So-and-So did.   
That is the way to ruin yourself. Did you ever hear of a man who in cold winters weather got warm by rolling on the ice and saying, I dont feel any heat as some people do. No, because he is looking in the wrong place to get the heat. If you expect to get anything in yourself you expect more than Paul ever got, for he said after he had long known his Master, I know that in me(that is, in my flesh)there dwells no good thing. Oh, Sir, you reply again, I find I am willing to do a great many things, but I cannot. And when I would be what I should be, I find a resistance somewhere within my own breast.   
Well and what of that? Even so did the ApostleWhen I would do good, evil is present with me. The fact is you have no business to look there. These things are not shields against Satan. What cares he for your experiences? Were they ever so good he would still roar at you. What he is afraid of is your faith. Throw down these things, then, which only encumber you and expose you and lay your breast bare to his attacks and take up the shield of faith. What has Satan said to you? You are too great a sinner to be saved. Well, quote this text, Him that comes unto Me, I will in nowise cast out.   
I had a lesson this week in the case of a good Christian man who through feebleness of mind has fallen at last into the deepest despair. I never met with a person in such awful despair as he was and you cannot tell how it puzzled me to give him any sort of comfort. Indeed, I failed after all. He said, Im too big a sinner to be saved. So I said, But the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin. Yes, he said, but you must remember the context, which says, If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.   
Now, I do not walk in the light, he said. I walk in the dark and I have no fellowship with the people of God now and therefore it does not apply to me. Well, I said, but He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. That is the only text, he said, I never can get over, for it says to the uttermost, and I know I cannot have gone beyond that and still it does not yield me comfort. I said, but God asks nothing of you but that you will believe Him. And you know if you have ever so feeble a faith you are like a childthe feeble hand of a child can receive. And that is the mark of a Christianof His fullness have all we received and if you only receive with your hand, that is enough.   
Yes, said he, I have not the handI have not the hand of faith. Very well, I said, you have the mouth of desire. You can ask, if you cannot receive with the hand. No, said he, I have not. I do not pray, I cannot pray. I have not the mouth of desire. Then, I said, all that is wanted is an empty place, a vacuum, so that God can put it in. Ah, Sir, said he, you have got me there! I have a great deal of vacuum. I have an aching voida vacuum. If ever there was an empty sinner in this world, I am one. Well, I said, Christ will fill that vacuum. There is a full Christ for empty sinners.   
Let me now say the same to you as I said to that poor man. All God wants is a vacuum. You have got a vacuum. This is not much to have simply to be empty, to be pumped dry, to have nothing at all in you. But then, He fills the hungry with good things and the rich He sends empty away. All that is wanted is to be down there on the ground. It is not hard work. It is not to sit up, nor to stand up, nor to kneelbut to lie there at His feet. And when He sees the soul flat on its face before Him, He will have mercy upon you.   
Now, Soul, for that shield of faith, say to Satan, In the name of God I dare believe. You are a great sinner, says he. Yes, but I believe He is a great Savior. But you have sinned beyond all hope. No, there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. But he says, You are shut out. No, you say, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. But your disease is of long standing. Yes, but, you say, if I but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be clean. But says Satan again, How dare you? Would you have the impudence? Well, you say, if I perish I will trust Christ and I will perish only there.

Have it fixed in your soul that in the teeth of everything you will trust Christthat be you such a sinner or not, still you will trust Christthat whether Satans accusations are true or false, you mean to have done answering them and simply trust Christ. Ah, Soul, then you shall have such joy and peace that nothing shall be like it. O that you would believe on Jesus now! Leave your feelings, leave your doings and your worksand trust Christ.   
I dare not, says one. Dare it, Man, dare it! You cannot do wrong for He commands you. This is the commandment, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Oh, but I may be lost even if I do. You will be lost if you do not, for he that believes not shall be dammed. But I am afraid of being condemned if I were to believe. He that believes not is condemned already. You are like the poor lepers at the gate. You are dying and you say, Let us fall to the Syriansif they kill us we can but die and if they save us alive we shall live.   
Say, as Benhadad did concerning king Ahab, We have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings, but let us put ropes upon our heads and go out to the king of Israelperhaps he will save our life. So say you to God, I have heard that You are merciful, if there is a wretch out of Hell that deserves to be in it, I am that sinner. If there is one that now feels that earth is provoked against him and the ground says, swallow him upI am he. If there is one which Heaven is provoked against him and cries, let the lightning flash destroy him. And the sea says, drown him. And the stars say, smite him with pestilence. And the sun says, scorch him.   
If there is one which the moon says let him be blasted. And the mildew says, let me devour his crops. And fever says, let me cut off the thread of his lifeif there is such a wretch out of Hell, I am he. Yet, say but to God, By Your grace I believe in Your mercy, I believe in Your promise, I believe in your Son Jesus. I believe in His precious blood and here I amdo with me as seems good in Your sight. Say but this and you shall have mercy and pardon and peace. My dear Hearers, shall I say this for myself and not for you? No, but may God grant that many a score of you this morning may be led to put your trust in Him who has said, They that trust in Me shall never be confounded.

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THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT   
NO. 2201

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Ephesians 6:17.

To be a Christian is to be a warrior. The good soldier of Jesus Christ must not expect to find ease in this worldit is a battlefield! Neither must he reckon upon the friendship of the world, for that would be enmity against God. His occupation is war. As he puts on, piece by piece, the panoply provided for him, he may wisely say to himself, This warns me of danger; this prepares me for warfare; this prophesies opposition.

Difficulties meet us even in standing our ground, for the Apostle, two or three times, bids usStand. In the rush of the fight, men are apt to be carried off their legs. If they can keep their footing, they will be victorious, but if they are borne down by the rush of their adversaries, everything is lost. You are to put on the heavenly armor in order that you may stand. And you will need it to maintain the position in which your Captain has placed you. If even to stand requires all this care, judge you what the warfare must be! The Apostle also speaks of withstanding as well as standing. We are not merely to defend, but also to attack. It is not enough that you are not conquered, you have to conquer and, therefore, we find that we are to take, not only a helmet to protect the head, but also a sword with which to annoy the foe. Ours, therefore, is a stern conflict, standing and withstandingand we shall need all the armor from the Divine magazine, all the strength from the mighty God of Jacob!

It is clear from our text that our defense and our conquest must be obtained by sheer fighting. Many try compromise, but if you are a true Christian, you can never do this business well. The language of deceit fits not a holy tongue. The adversary is the father of lies and those that are with him understand the art of equivocation, but saints abhor it. If we discuss terms of peace and attempt to gain something by policy, we have entered upon a course from which we shall return in disgrace. We have no order from our Captain to patch up a truce and get as good terms as we can. We are not sent out to offer concessions! It is said that if we yield a little, perhaps the world will yield a little, also, and good may come of it. If we are not too strict and narrow, perhaps sin will kindly consent to be more decent. Our association with it will prevent its being so barefaced and atrocious. If we are not narrow-minded, our broad doctrine will go down with the world and those on the other side will not be so greedy of error as they now are. No such thing! Assuredly this is not the order which our Captain has issued. When peace is to be made, He will make it, Himself, or He will tell us how to behave to that end. But at present our orders are very different.

Neither may we hope to gain by being neutral, or granting an occasional truce. We are not to cease from conflict and try to be as agreeable as we can with our Lords foes, frequenting their assemblies and tasting their dainties. No such orders are written here. You are to grasp your weapon and go forth to fight.

Neither may you so much as dream of winning the battle by accident. No man was ever holy by a happy chance. Infinite damage may be done by carelessness, but no man ever won lifes battle by it. To let things go on as they please is to let them bear us down to Hell. We have no orders to be quiet and take matters easily. No, we are to always pray and constantly watch. The one note that rings out from the text is thisTAKE THE SWORD! TAKE THE SWORD! No longer is it talk and debate! No longer is it parley and compromise! The word of thunder isTake the sword. The Captains voice is clear as a trumpetTake the sword! No Christian here will have been obedient to our text unless with clear, sharp and decisive firmness, courage and resolve, he takes the sword! We must go to Heaven with sword in hand, all the way. TAKE THE SWORD. On this command I would enlarge. May the Holy Spirit help me!

It is noteworthy that there is only one weapon of offense provided, although there are several pieces of armor. The Roman soldier usually carried a spear as well as a sword. We have seen frequent representations of the legionary standing guard as sentry and he almost always stands with a spear in his right hand, while his sword hangs at his side. But Paul, for excellent reasons, concentrates our offensive weapon in one, because it answers for all. We are to use the sword and that only. Therefore, if you are going to this fight, see well to your only weapon. If you are to have no other, take care that you have this always in your hand. Let the Captains voice ring in your ear, Take the sword! Take the sword! and so go forth to the field.

Notice, first, the sword you are to take is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That is our first head and the second is equally upon the surface of the textThis sword is to be ours. We are ordered to take the sword of the Spirit and so make it our own sword.

I. First, the Word of God which is to be our one weapon is of noble origin, for IT IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT. It has the properties of a sword, and those were given it by the Spirit of God.

Here we note that the Holy Spirit has a sword. He is quiet as the dew, tender as the anointing oil, soft as the zephyr of eventide and peaceful as a dove. And yet, under another aspect, He wields a deadly weapon. He is the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning and He bears not the sword in vain. Of Him it may be said, The Lord is a man of war: Jehovah is His name.

The Word of God in the hand of the Spirit wounds very terribly and makes the heart of man to bleed. Do you not remember, some of you, when you used to be gashed with this sword Sunday after Sunday? Were you not cut to the heart by it, so as to be angry with it? You almost made up your mind to turn away from hearing the Gospel again. That sword pursued you and pierced you in the secrets of your souland made you bleed in a thousand places. At last you were pricked in the heart, which is a far better thing than being, cut to the heartand then execution was done, indeed! That wound was deadly and none but He that killed could make you alive! Do you remember how, after this, your sins were slain, one after the other? Their necks were laid on the block and the Spirit acted as an executioner with His sword. After that, blessed be God, your fears, doubts, despair and unbelief were also hacked to pieces by this same sword. The Word gave you life! But it was, at the first, a great killer. Your soul was like a battlefield after a great fight, under the first operations of the Divine Spirit, whose sword returns not empty from the conflict.

Beloved, the Spirit of God has war with the Amalek of evil and error from generation to generation. He will spare none of the evils which now pollute the nations. His sword will never be quiet till all these Canaanites are destroyed. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ not only by what He reveals, but also by what He overturns. The strife may be weary, but it will be carried on from age to age, till the Lord Jesus shall appear, for the Spirit of God shall always espouse the cause of love against hate, of the Truth of God against error, of holiness against sin, of Christ against Satan! He will win the day and those who are with Him shall, in His might, be more than conquerors. The Holy Spirit has proclaimed war and wields a two-edged sword.

The Holy Spirit wields no sword but the Word of God . This wonderful Book, which contains the utterances of Gods mouth, is the one weapon which the Holy Spirit elects to use for His war-like purposes. It is a spiritual weapon and so is suitable to the Holy Spirit. The weapons of His warfare are not carnalHe never uses either persecution or patronage, force or bribery, glitter of grandeur, or terror of power. He works upon men by the Word, which is suitable to His own spiritual Nature and to the spiritual work which is to be accomplished. While it is spiritual, this weapon is mighty through God. A cut from the Word of God will cleave a mans spirit from head to foot, so sharp is this sword! Though by long practice in sin a man may have coated himself as with impenetrable mail, yet the Word of the Lord will divide the northern iron and the steel. The Holy Spirit can make a man feel the Divine power of the sacred Word in the very center of his being!

For battling with the spirits of man, or with spirits of an infernal kind, there is no weapon so keen, so piercing, so able to divide between the joints and marrow, so penetrating as to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The Word, in the Spirits hand, gives no superficial wound, but cuts into the mans heart, and so wounds him that there is no healing save by supernatural power! The wounded conscience will bleed; its pains will be upon it day and night; and though it seeks out a thousand medicines, no salve but one can cure a gash which this terrible sword has made. This weapon is two-edgedindeed, it is all edgeand whichever way it strikes, it wounds and kills. There is no such a thing as the flat of the sword of the Spiritit has a razor edge every way. Beware how you handle it, you critics! It may wound even you. It will cut you to your destruction, one of these days, unless you are converted. He that uses the Word in the Lords battles may use it upon carnal hopes and then strike back upon unbelieving fears. He may smite with one edge, the love of sin, and then with the other, the pride of self-righteousness. It is a conquering weapon in all ways, this wondrous sword of the Spirit of God!

The Word, we say, is the only sword which the Spirit uses. I know the Holy Spirit uses gracious sermons, but it is only in proportion as they have the Word of God in them. I know the Holy Spirit uses religious books, but only so far as they are the Word of God told out in other languages. Conviction, conversion and consolation are still worked, but only by the Word of God. Learn, then, the wisdom of using the Word of God for holy purposes. The Spirit has abundant ability to speak of His own self, apart from the written Word. The Holy Spirit is God and, therefore, He is the greatest spirit in the universe. All wisdom dwells in Him. He thought out the laws which govern Nature and direct Providence. The Holy Spirit is the great Teacher of human spiritsHe taught Bezaleel and the artificers in the wilderness how to make the fine linen and the gold and carved work for the Tabernacle. All arts and sciences are perfectly known to Him and infinitely more than men can ever discover. Yet He will not use these things in this holy controversy. In the quarrel of His Covenant, He uses neither philosophy, nor science, nor rhetoric. In contending against the powers of darkness, The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. It is written is His masterstroke! Words which God has spoken by holy men of old and has caused to be recorded on the sacred pagethese are the battle-axe and weapons of war of His Spirit! This Book contains the Word of God and is the Word of Godand this it is which the Holy Spirit judges to be so effectual a weapon against evil that He uses this, and only this, as His sword in the great conflict with the powers of darkness.

The Word is the sword of the Spirit because it is of His own making . He will not use a weapon of human workmanship, lest the sword boast itself against the hand that wields it. The Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to the minds of holy men. He spoke the Word into their hearts and thus He made them think as He would have them think and to write what He willed them to writeso that what they spoke and wrote was spoken and written as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Blessed be the Holy Spirit for deigning to use so many writers and yet, Himself, to remain the veritable Author of this collection of holy Books! We are grateful for Moses, for David, for Isaiah, for Paul, for Peter, for John, but most of all for that superintending Editor, that innermost Author of the whole sacred Volume even the Holy Spirit!

A warrior may well be careful as to the make of His sword. If a man had made his own sword, had tempered the metal, had, himself, passed the blade through many fires, and worked it to perfectionthen, if he were a skillful workman, he would feel confidence in his sword. When work is done, nowadays, it is, as a rule, badly done. Work done by contract is usually done poorly in some part or another. But when a man does a work for himself, he is likely to do it thoroughly, and produce an article which he can depend upon. The Holy Spirit has made this Book, Himselfevery portion of it bears His initial and impressand thus He has a sword worthy of His own hands, a true Jerusalem blade of heavenly fabric. He delights to use a weapon so Divinely made and He does use it right gloriously!

The Word of God is also the sword of the Spirit because He puts the edge upon it. It is because He is in it that it is so keen and cutting. I believe in the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, not only in the day when it was written, but onward, and even to this day. It is still Inspired. The Holy Spirit still breathes through the chosen Words. I told you the sword was all edge, but I would add that the Holy Spirit makes it so. It would have no edge at all if it were not for His Presence within it and His perpetual working by it. How many people read their Bibles and yet derive no more benefit from it than if they had read an old almanac! In fact, they would more easily keep awake over an ancient Bradshaw than over a chapter of Scripture. The ministers of the Gospel may preach Gods Word in all sincerity and purity and yet, if the Spirit of God is not present, we might as well have preached mere moral essays, for no good can come of our testimony. The Holy Spirit rides in the chariot of Scripture and not in the wagon of modern thought. Scripture is that Ark of the Covenant which contains the golden pot of manna and also bears above it the Divine Light of Gods shining. The Spirit of God works in, by, through and with the Wordand if we keep to that Word, we may rest assured that the Holy Spirit will stay with us and make our testimony to be a thing of power. Let us pray the blessed Spirit to put an edge on our preaching, lest we say much and accomplish little! Hear us in this thing, O blessed One!

It is the sword of the Spirit because He alone can instruct us in the use of it. You think, young man, that you can pick up your Bible and go and preach from it at once, properly and successfully? You have made a presumptuous mistake! A sword is a weapon which may do hurt to the man who flourishes with it in mere wanton pride. No one can handle the sword of the Spirit aright save the chosen man whom God has ordained from before the foundation of the world and trained in feats of arms. By this, the elect of God are knownthat they love the Word of God and they have a reverence for itand discern between it and the words of man. Notice the lambs in the field, just now, and there may be a thousand ewes and lambs, but every lamb can find its own mother. So does a true-born child of God know where to go for the milk which is to nourish his soul. The sheep of Christ know the Shepherds voice in the Word and they will not follow a stranger, for they know not the voice of strangers. Gods own people have discernment to discover and relish Gods own Word. They will not be misled by the cunning craftiness of human devices! Saints know the Scriptures by inward instinct. The holy life, which God has infused into Believers by His Spirit, loves the Scriptures, and learns how to use them for holy purposes.

Young soldier, you must go to the training ground of the Holy Spirit to be made a proficient swordsman. You will go in vain to the metaphysician or to the logician, for neither of these know how to handle a spiritual weapon. In other arts they may be masters, but in the sacred use of Divine theology, they are mere fools! In the things of the Word we are dunces till we enter the school of the Holy Spirit. He must take of the things of Christ and show them to us. He must teach us how to grip this sword by faith and how to hold it by watchfulness, so as to parry the adversarys thrust and carry the war into the foemans territory. He is well taught, who can swing this great two-handed sword to and fro and mow a lane through the midst of his opponents, and come out a conqueror at the end. It may take a long time to learn this art, but we have a right skillful Teacher. Those of us who have been in this warfare 30 or 40 years, feel that we have not yet reached the full use of this sword! No, I, for one, know that I need to be taught daily how to use this mysterious weapon which is capable of so much more than I have yet supposed. It is the sword of the Spirit, adapted for the use of an Almighty arm and, therefore, equal to the doing of far more than we think. Holy Spirit, teach us now feats of arms by this, Your sword!

But, chiefly, it is the sword of the Spirit, because He is the great Master in the use of it. Oh, that He would come and show us, this morning, how He can thrust and cleave with it! In this house of prayer we have often seen Him at His work. Here the slain of the Lord have been many. We have seen this sword take off the head of many a Goliath doubt and slay a horde of cares and unbeliefs! We have seen the Spirit pile up heaps on heaps of the slain when the Word of conviction has gone forthand men have seen sin to be sinand fallen down as dead before the Lord and His Law. We also know what the use of the sword by the Spirit of God means, for within our own being He has left marks of His prowess. He has killed our doubts and fears and left no more mistrusts to worry us.

There was a man of God who was frequently subject to doubts, even doubts upon the fundamentals of religion. He hated this state of mind, but still, he could not get rid of the habit of evil questioning. In answer to prayer, the Spirit came and convinced him of the pride of his intellect and of the wickedness of setting up his judgment against the Word of the Lordand from that day forward he was never the subject of another fit of unbelief! He saw things clearly in the Light of the Holy Spirit and that is to see them, indeed! The great giant of doubt is sorely wounded by the sword of the Spirityes, he is slain outrightfor the Spirit works in the Believer such a conviction of the Truth of God that assurance banishes suspicion! When the Holy Spirit deals with the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life, these also lie at His feet, trophies to the power of His mighty weapon, even the Word of God! The Holy Spirit is glorious in the use of this sword. He finds that this weapon suits His hand and He seeks no other! Let us use it, also, and be glad to do so. Though it is the sword of the Spirit, yet our feeble hand may grasp it. Yes, and find in the grasping, that somewhat of the Divine power comes unto our arm!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, is it not a very high honor put upon you, as soldiers of the Cross, that you should be allowed, no, commanded to take the sword of the Spirit? The raw recruit is not trusted with the generals sword, but here you are, armed with the weapon of God, the Holy Spirit, and called upon to bear that sacred sword which is so gloriously wielded by the Lord God, Himself! This we are to bear, and no other. Does the timid heart enquire, How, my Master, shall I meet my adversaries? Here, says the Holy Spirit, take this! This is My own sword. I have done great marvels with it. Take it and nothing shall stand against you. When you remember the potency of this sword. When the Spirit tests it upon yourself, you may take it with confidence, and use it in your holy war with full assurance. That Word of God which could convert you, can convert anybody! If it could kill your despair, it can remove another mans despondency. If it has conquered your pride and self-will, it can subdue the same in your children and your neighbors. Having done what it has certainly done for you, you may have a full persuasion that, before its power, no case is hopeless. Therefore, see to it that you use, from this day forth, no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

II. This fairly lands me in the second portion of my discourse. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, but IT IS ALSO TO BE OUR SWORD.   
Here I must begin again and go over much of the same ground. We shall need a sword. Our warfare is not childs playwe mean business. We have to deal with fierce foes who are only to be met with keen weapons. Buffets will not suffice in this contestwe must come to sword-cuts. You may be of a very quiet spirit, but your adversaries are not! If you attempt to play at Christian warfare, they will not. To meet the powers of darkness is no sham battle. They mean mischief. Nothing but your eternal damnation will satisfy the fiendish hearts of Satan and his crew. You must take not so much a flag to unfurl, or a drum to beat, as a sword to use and an especially sharp sword, too. In this combat you will have to use a sword such as even evil spirits can feel, capable of dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. If you are to live through this fight and come off victorious, no form of conflict will suffice less sharp and cutting than sword-work.   
Depend upon it that in this struggle you will be forced to come to close quarters. The foe aims at your heart and pushes home. A spear will not do, nor bow and arrowthe enemy is too near for anything but hand-tohand fighting. Brothers and Sisters, our foes are not only of our house, but of our heart! I find an enemy within which is always near and I cannot get away from him. I find that my antagonist will get his hand on my throat if he can. If our foes were far away and we could reach them with artillery which would kill at six or seven miles distance, we might lead a pretty easy life. But no, they are here! At our doors! Yes, within usnearer than hands and feet. Now for the short sword! The claymore of Holy Scripture, to stab and cut, near and now. No sling and stone will avail us here, but we must take the sword. You have to slay your foe, or your foe will slay you! It is with us Christians as it was with the Highlanders in battle, when their leader called out to them, Lads, there they are! If you dinna kill them they will kill you. There is no room for peaceit is war to the knife, not only now, but to lifes end!   
The use of the sword is necessary for attack. I have reminded you several times already that it will not suffice for the Christian to guard against sin and ward off temptation from himselfhe has to attack the powers of evil. In our case, the best method of defense is an attack. I have heard of one who would bring an action in law to gain his ends, for he thought this better than being the defendant. That may be matter of question, but in war it is often safer to attack than defend. Carry the warfare into the enemys territory. Be trying to win from the adversary and he will not win so much from you. Do not merely be sober, yourselves, but attack drunkenness. Do not be content with being free from superstition, yourself, but expose it wherever it appears! Do not merely be devout when you feel obliged to be so, but pray for the growth of the kingdompray always! Do not merely say, I will keep Satan out of my family by bringing up my children aright, but go to the Sunday school and teach other children, and so carry the war over the border! God forbid that we should ever go to war as a nation! But if we were at war with some nation on the Continent, I would certainly say, Let the Continentals have the battles on their own groundwe do not want a campaign over here. It is wise to keep the war in the enemys own regions. If we had fought the devil more in the world, he might never have been able to invade the Church so terribly as he has done. Attack with the sword, for it is your calling, and thus will you best defend yourself.   
We need the sword for real fighting. Do you think that you can dream yourselves into Heaven? Or ride there in the chariot of ease? Or fly on the wings of brass music? You make a great mistake if you so imagine. A real war is raging! Your opponents are in deadly earnest and you must take your sword!   
And, further, we need this sword, this sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We say with David, There is none like that; give it to me. It has worked such wonders that we prefer it to all others. No other will match the enemys weapon. If we fight the devil with human reason, the first time our wooden sword comes in contact with a Satanic temptation it will be cut in pieces! If you do not wield a true Jerusalem blade, you are in grave perilyour weapon will break off at the hiltand where will you be? Standing defenseless, with nothing but the handle of a broken sword in your hand, you will be the object of your adversarys ridicule! You must have this sword, for no other will penetrate the foe, and no other will last out the battle. After 20 years, what has become of the pious resolutions of your youth? What is the staying power of your consecration made in the hour of enthusiasm? Alas, how little trust can be placed in it! What would become of us after 30 years of fighting if we had not the Word of God to rely upon? The Word of the Lord endures forever, but nothing else does. We may do well in early days, but we shall fail in old age if we have not eternal Truths of God to fall back upon.   
I can commend this sword to you all, my Brothers and Sisters, although you are so varied in character. This sword suits every hand. Youth or age may, alike, use this weapon. These dear girls from the Orphanage and yonder lads from the Bible class, may fight the battle of their youth with the Word of God, for Holy Scripture may impress and guide our freshest life. You that have grown gray. You that have passed 70 or 80, you will value the Bible more than ever and you will find that this sword is the best for veteran warriors. Young men and young women, here is a sword suited for all of you, and well does it become the hand of the feeblest and the gentlest! The Holy Spirit has, in the sacred Word, prepared an implement of warfare suited for great minds and small, for the cultured and the uneducated. A wonderful sword this is, which, in the hands of faith, reveals an adaptation marvelous to the last degree!   
Whatever others may say, it is sufficient for us that this is the regulation sword. A soldier is not left to choose his own equipment. He must carry such arms as his sovereign appoints. This is the regulation sword in Christs army. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is what you are bid to take and, if you, in willfulness, resolve to exchange it for another, you commit an act of rebellion and you make the change at your own risk and peril! Come, then, let us each take the Word of God and carry it nearer our hearts than ever, for such is the Word of command, Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.   
Now, see what we are told to do. We need a sword. We need this sword. We are to take this sword. Note that we are not told that we may lay it downthe demand to take the sword is continuous and there is no hint of its being suspended. There is a time, of course, when the soldier of Her Majesty may remove his sword from his side and take off his regimentals, but there is never such a time with a Christian! One might have thought, from what we have seen of late, that orders had come from headquarters that the soldiers were to lay down the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and take to lighter weapons. Entertainments, amusements, farces, and sing-songs are now used to do what the Gospel has failed to achieve! Is it not sadly so? Well, if any will try these silly toys, I can only say that they have no command from their Lord to warrant them in their proceedings. Take all these things and see what they will do, but you make the trial at your own risk, and on your own heads the result of failure will fall.

The standing orders are to take the sword of the Spirit and no new regulation has ever been issued by the great Captain of salvation. From the days of Paul till now, the Word stands, Take the sword of the Spirit. All other things will surely fail and, therefore, the one sole abiding command is, Take the sword of the Spirit. We are not told to hang up this sword for exhibition. Certain people have a handsomely-bound Bible to lie upon the table of the best roomand a fine ornament it is! A Family Bible is a treasure! But I pray you, do not let your love of the Bible end there. With a soldier in war, a sword is not meant to be hung up in the tent, nor even to be flourished in the air, but it is issued to be used. Nor are we to push this sword into a sheath, as many do who take the Bible and add so much of criticism, or of their own opinion to it, that its edge is not felt! Many men use their low opinion of Inspiration as a scabbard into which they push the Bible down. Their vast knowledge makes a beautiful scabbard and they push down the sword, saying, Keep still, there! O sword of the Lord, rest and be quiet! After we have preached our heart out, and men have felt the power of it, they make a desperate effort to imprison the Word in their unbelieving theory, or in their worldliness. They hold down the Word all the week with a firm hand, for fear its edge or point should wound them. It is the scabbard of culture, or philosophy, or of progress and in this they shut up the living Word of God as in a coffin!   
We are not to bury the Word under other matters, but we are to take it as a sword, which means, as I understand it, first, believe it. Believe every portion of it. Believe it with a true and real faith, not with a mere creedal faith which says, This is the orthodox thing. Believe it as a matter of fact for every day, affecting your life. Believe it! And when you have believed it, then study it. Oh, for a closer study of the Word of God! Are there not some of you who have never even heard or read all that the Lord has said? Are there not passages of the Bible which have never been read by you? It is a melancholy fact that there would be even a line of the sacred Scriptures which has never once come under your eyes. Read the Bible right through, from beginning to end.   
Begin tomorrowno, begin todayand go steadily through the whole of the sacred Book, with prayer and meditation. Never let it be suspected by you that God has recorded Truths in His Word which you have never even once read. Study the Word and work out its meaning. Go deep into the spirit of Inspiration. He gets most gold who digs the deepest in this mine. They used to say of certain mines in Cornwall that the deeper you went the richer was the ore. Assuredly is it so with the mines of Inspired Scripture. The deeper you go under the Spirits guidance, the larger is the reward for your toil. Take the sword with the grip of sincere faith. Hold it fast by a fuller knowledge. And then exercise yourself daily in its use. The sword is to be taken for earnest fight. You will not be long before occasion arises in such a world as this. You will have to parry with it, to pierce with it, to cut with it and to kill with it. Where shall I begin? says one. Begin at home and, for many a day, you will have your hands full! When you have slain all the rebels at home and long before that, you may take a turn at those around you in the world, and in the professing church.   
Inside your own heart you will find a band of bandits which should be exterminated. There will always be need to keep the sword going within your own territory. End this civil war before you go into foreign parts. When the war within the city of Mansoul has been victoriously carried through, besiege the heart of your friend, your child, your neighbor. Behold, the world lies in the Wicked One! Errors abound and colossal systems of falsehood still stand aloft. Men are still dragged down by the archdeceiver. Surely, we feel our swords flying out of their sheaths when we think of the millions who are being ruined by sin and error! Oh, for a mighty onslaught upon the powers of darkness!   
Once more, we are to take this sword with a purpose. We are to use it that we may be able to stand and to withstand. If you want to stand, draw the sword and smite your doubts. How fiercely unbelief assails! Here comes a doubt as to your election. Pierce it through with the Word. Soon comes a doubt as to the precious blood. Cleave it from head to foot with the assurance of the Word that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin! Here comes another doubt and yet another. As quick as arm can move, drive texts of Scripture through every new fallacy, every new denial of the Truth of God and spit the whole of them upon the rapier of the Word! It will be for your good to kill these doubts outright. Do not play with them, but fight them in real earnest! You will find, also, that temptations will come in hordes. Meet them with the precepts of sacred Writ and slay even the desire of evil by the Spirits application of the Holy Word! The washing of water by the Word is a glorious cleanser. Discouragements will arise like mists of the morning. Oh, that Gods Word may shine them away with the beams of the promises! Your afflictions multiply and you will never be able to overcome impatience and distrust except by the Infallible Word of God. You can bear trial and bear it patiently, if you use this weapon to kill anxiety. You will stand fast in the evil day and, having done all, you will still stand, if this sword is in your hand.   
You have not only to stand fast, yourselves, but you have to win souls for Christ! Do not try to conquer sin in others, or capture a heart for Jesus except with the sword of the Spirit. How the devil laughs when we try to make converts apart from Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit! He laughs, I say, for he derides our folly. What can you do, you children, playing with your little wooden swordswhat can you do against men covered from head to foot with the steel mail of the habit of sin? Sunday school teachers, teach your children more and more the pure Word of God! And preachers, do not try to be original, but be content to take of the things of Christ and show them to the people, for that is what the Holy Spirit, Himself doesand you will be wise to use His method and His sword. No sinner around you will be saved except by the knowledge of the great Truths contained in the Word of God. No man will ever be brought to repentance, to faith and to life in Christ, apart from the constant application of the Truth through the Spirit.   
I hear great shouting, great noises everywhere, about great things that are going to be donelet us see them! The whole world is going to be embraced within the Church, so they say. I fear the world will not be much the better for inclusion in such a church! Big boasters should heed the word of the wise man, Let not him that girds on his harness boast himself as he that takes it off. If the champion goes forth with any other sword than the Word of God, he had better not boast at all, for he will come back with his sword broken, his shield cast away, and himself grimy with dishonor. Defeat awaits that man who forsakes the Word of the Lord!   
I have done when I have asked you to remember that the text is in the present tenseTake unto you the sword of the Spirit even now. What varieties of people there are here this morning! Believers have come here in all sorts of perils. Let them each one take the sword of the Spirit and they will overcome every foe! Here, too, are seekers who wish to be Christians, but they cannot compass it. What is the matter this morning? Oh, says one, I have been in the habit of sinning, and the habit is very strong upon me. Fight with sinful habits with the Word of God, as the sword of the Spiritso only will you conquer your evil self. Find a text of Scripture that will cleave your sin down to the backbone, or stab it to the heart. Alas, Satan tempts me horribly, cries one, I have been lately assailed in many ways. Have you? You are not the first. Our Divine Lord in the wilderness was tempted of the devil. He might have fought Satan with a thousand weapons, but He chose to defeat him with only one. He said, It is written. It is written. It is written. He pricked the foeman so sorely with this sharp point that the arch-adversary thought to try the same sword and he also began to say, It is written. But he cut himself with this sword, for he did not quote the passages correctly, nor give the whole of themand the Master soon found the way to knock aside his sword and wound him still more.   
Follow your Lords example. Oh, but, says one, I am so low in spirits. Very well. Fight lowness of spirits with the Word of God. The doctor recommended me, says one, to take a little spirits to raise my spirits. Those doctors are always having this sin laid to their charge. I am not so sure that they are not often maligned. You like the dose and that is why you take it! Try the Word of God for lowness of spirits and you will have found a sure remedy. I find, if I can lay a promise under my tongue, like a sweet lozenge, and keep it in my mouth or mind all the day long, I am happy enough. If I cannot find a Scripture to comfort me, then my inward troubles are multiplied. Fight despondency and despair with the sword of the Spirit. I cannot tell what your particular difficulty may be at this moment, but I give you this direction for all holy warfareTake the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.   
You must overcome every enemy, but this weapon is all you need! If you, my Hearer, would overcome sin and conquer unbelief, take such a word as this, Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. And as you look you shall be savedand doubt shall dieand sin be slain! God grant you His Spirits aid, for Christs sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONEphesians 6.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK917, 673, 672.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

÷Php 1.6

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS  
NO. 872

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the altars of yesterday to enkindle the sacrifices of today—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 54.**  
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÷Php 1.18

EVANGELICAL CONGRATULATIONS  
NO. 370

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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OPENING SERVICES  
NO. 371

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and down they would go into the pit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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MEETING OF THE NEIGHBORING CHURCHES  
NO. 372

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

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

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

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

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

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÷Php 1.19

THE MINISTER’S PLEA  
NO. 1139

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

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

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

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

*“Big with mercy and will break*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

that it hated the Lord before it hated us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

÷Php 1.21

THE GOOD MAN’S LIFE AND DEATH  
NO. 146

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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÷Php 1.23

“FOREVER WITH THE LORD”  
NO. 1136

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

their love is fervent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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÷Php 1.27

THE GOSPEL’S POWER IN A CHRISTIAN’S LIFE

NO. 640

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*“Careless, myself a dying man,*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

profession of being one of Christ’s” ?

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

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÷Php 1.29

CHRIST’S MOTIVE AND OURS  
NO. 2232

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #348 New Park Street Pulpit 1

÷Php 2.1

CONSOLATION IN CHRIST  
NO. 348

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*“Loose all their bars of massy light,*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

awaits earthly dignity for your earthly shame.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

÷Php 2.8

OUR LORD IN THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION  
NO. 2281

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

÷Php 2.9

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST  
NO. 101

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

÷Php 2.12

YOUR OWN SALVATION  
NO. 1003

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORKING OUT WHAT IS WORKED IN  
NO. 820

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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÷Php 2.14

BELIEVERS—LIGHTS IN THE WORLD  
NO. 472

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

men, shining as lights in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

÷Php 3.7

THE PASTOR’S JOY AND CONFIDENCE  
NO. 2154

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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÷Php 3.8

THE PRICELESS PRIZE  
NO. 3209

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13-15. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. If you are a true Believer in Jesus, be of this mind—always to be pressing forward to something higher and better. If God has given you one form of maturity, press onward to a much higher form. Seek continually to rise. The eagle’s motto is, “Higher, Higher!” Let it be your motto, too. Many of God’s people do not believe that He can make them what He means to make them, or, at least, they act as if they did not believe that He can. They apparently are not conscious of what their privileges really are and are living far below where they might live in the happy enjoyment of peace and power and usefulness! May God help us, by His gracious Spirit, to know all of Christ that we can and to be as much like Christ as we can.

16-18. Nevertheless, to the degree we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. (For many walk)—I suppose Paul is referring to many even in the Church of his day. “For many walk”—

18. Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. [See Sermons #102, Volume 2—FALSE  
PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED and #2553, Volume 44—THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The  
worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has are the enemies inside the professing Church of Christ!

19. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. They call themselves spiritual, yet they live for earthly things, indulging their appetites, living for self, yet pretending to be Christians, whereas selfishness is the very reverse of Christianity.

20, 21. For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. [See Sermon #973,

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÷Php 3.10

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION  
NO. 2080

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, APRIL 21, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”** *Php 3:10***.**

PAUL, in the verses before the text, had deliberately laid aside his own personal righteousness. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.” It is insinuated in these days that a belief in the righteousness of faith will lead men to care little for good works—that it will act as a sedative to their zeal, and therefore they will exhibit no ardor for holiness. The very reverse is seen in the case of the Apostle and in the case of all who cast aside the righteousness of the Law—that they may be clothed with that righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Paul made a list of his advantages as to confidence in the flesh and they were very great. But he turned his back upon them all for Christ’s sake. Accepting Christ to be everything to him, did he, therefore, sit down in self-content and imagine that personal character was nothing? By no means! A noble ambition fired his soul—he longed to know Christ—the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. If by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead, he became a holy walker and a heavenly runner—because of what he saw in Christ Jesus.

Be sure of this—the less you value your own righteousness—the more will you seek after true holiness. The less you think of your own beauty, the more ardently will you long to become like the Lord Jesus. Those who dream of being saved by their own good works are usually those who have no good works worth mentioning. Those who sincerely lay aside all hope of salvation by their own merits are fruitful in every virtue to the praise of God. Nor is this a strange thing. For the less a man thinks of himself, the more he will think of Christ and the more will he aim at being like He is. The less esteem he has of his own past good works, the more earnest will he be to show his gratitude for being saved by Divine Grace through the righteousness of Christ. Faith works by love, purifies the soul and sets the heart running after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Therefore it is a purifying and active principle, and by no means the inert thing which some suppose it to be.

What, then, was the great object of the Apostle’s ardor? It was, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” Paul already knew the Lord Jesus by faith. He knew so much of Him as to be able to teach others. He had looked to Jesus and known the power of His death. But he

now desired that the vision of his faith might become still better known by experience. You may know a man and have an idea that he is powerful. But to know him and his power over you, is a stage further. You may have read of a man so as to be familiar with his history and his character and yet you may have no knowledge of him and of his personal influence over yourself.

Paul desired intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus—personal communion with the Lord to such a degree that he should feel His power at every point and know the effect of all that He had worked out in His life, death and resurrection. He knew that Jesus died and he aspired to rehearse the history in his own soul’s story—he would be dead with Him to the world. He knew that Jesus was buried and he would gladly be “buried with Him in Baptism unto death.” He knew that Jesus rose and his longing was to rise with Him in newness of life. Yes, he even remembered that his Lord had ascended up on high and he rejoiced to say, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

His great desire was to have reproduced in himself the life of Jesus so as to know all about Him by being made like He is. The best Life of Christ is not by Canon Farrar, or Dr. Geikie—it is written in the experience of the saint by the Holy Spirit.

I want you to observe, at the very outset, that all Paul desired to know was always in connection with our Lord, Himself. He says, “That I may know HIM and the power of His resurrection.” Jesus first, and then the power of His resurrection. Beware of studying doctrine, precept, or experiences apart from the Lord Jesus, who is the soul of all. Doctrine without Christ will be nothing better than His empty tomb. Doctrine with Christ is a glorious high throne—with the King sitting on it. Precepts without Christ are impossible commands. But precepts from the lips of Jesus have a quickening effect upon the heart. Without Christ you can do nothing. But abiding in Him you bring forth much fruit.

Always let your preaching and your hearing look towards the personal Savior. This makes all the difference in preaching. Ministers may preach sound doctrine by itself and be utterly without unction. But those who preach it in connection with the Person of the blessed Lord have an anointing which nothing else can give. Christ Himself, by the Holy Spirit, is the savor of a true ministry.

This morning we will confine our thoughts to one theme and unite with the Apostle in a strong desire to know our Lord in connection with the power of His resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was, in itself, a marvelous display of power. To raise the dead body of our Lord from the tomb was as great a work as the creation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each worked this greatest miracle. I need not stay to quote the texts in which the resurrection of our Lord is ascribed to the Father—who brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep.

Nor need I mention Scriptures in which the Lord is said to have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Nor those instances in which that great work is ascribed to the Lord Jesus, Himself. But assuredly the Sacred Writings represent the Divine Trinity in Unity as gloriously co-operating in the raising again from the dead the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was, however, a especial instance of our Lord’s own power. He said, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.” He also said, concerning His life, “I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.”

I do not know whether I can convey my own thought to you. What strikes me very forcibly is this—no mere man going to his grave could say, “I have power to take my life again.” The departure of life leaves the man necessarily powerless—he cannot restore himself to life. Behold the sacred Body of Jesus embalmed in spices and wrapped about with linen. It is laid within the sealed and guarded tomb—how can it come back to life? Yet Jesus said, “I have power to take My life again.” And He proved it. Strange power—that spirit of His which had traveled through the under lands and upwards to the eternal Glory—had power to return and to re-enter that holy Thing which had been born of the virgin and to revivify that flesh which could not see corruption.

Behold the dead and buried One makes Himself alive again! Herein is a marvelous thing. He was master over death, even when death seemed to have mastered Him—He entered the grave as a captive but left it as a conqueror. He was compassed by the bonds of death but He could not be held by them. Even in His burial garments He came to life—from those wrappings He unbound Himself—from the sealed tomb He stepped into liberty. If, in the extremity of His weakness He had the power to rise out of the sepulcher and come forth in newness of life, what can He not accomplish now?

I do not think, however, that Paul is here thinking so much of the power displayed in the resurrection as of the power which comes out of it—which may most properly be called, “the power of His resurrection.” This the Apostle desired to apprehend and to know. This is a very wide subject and I cannot encompass the whole region. But many things may be said under four heads. The power of our Lord’s resurrection is an evidencing power, a justifying power, a life-giving power and a consoling power.

I. First, the power of our Lord’s resurrection is AN EVIDENCING POWER. Here I shall liken it to a seal which is set to a document to prove its authenticity. Our Lord’s resurrection from the dead was a proof that He was the Messiah. That He had come upon the Father’s business. That He was the Son of God, and that the Covenant which Jehovah had made with Him was henceforth ratified and established. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Thus said Paul at Antioch—“The promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again. As it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You.”

Nobody witnessing our Lord’s resurrection could doubt His Divine Character and that His mission upon earth was from the eternal God.

Well did Peter and John declare that it was the Prince of Life that God had raised from the dead. Our Lord had given this for a sign unto the mocking Pharisees—that as Jonah lay in the deep till the third day and then came forth—even so would He, Himself, lie in the heart of the earth till the third day and then arise from the dead. His rising proved that He was sent of God and that the power of God was with Him.

Our Lord had entered into a Covenant with the Father before all worlds, wherein He had, on His part, engaged to finish redemption and make atonement for sin. That He had done this was affirmed by His rising again from the dead—the resurrection was the attestation of the Father to the fulfillment on the part of the Second Adam of His portion in the Everlasting Covenant. His blood is the blood of the Everlasting Covenant and His resurrection is the seal of it. “Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” as the witness of the Eternal God to the glory of the Son.

So much is the resurrection the proof of our Lord’s mission that it falls to the ground without it. If our Lord Jesus had not risen from the dead, our faith in Him would have lacked the cornerstone of the foundation on which it rests. Paul writes most positively—“If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain.” He declares that the Apostles would have been found false witnesses of God, “Because,” he says, “we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” “If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.” The resurrection of Jesus is the keystone of the arch of our holy faith. If you take the resurrection away, the whole structure lies in ruins.

The death of Christ, albeit that it is the ground of our confidence for the pardon of sin, would not have furnished such a foundation had He not risen from the dead. Were He still dead, His death would have been like the death of any other person—and would have given us no assurance of acceptance. His life, with all the beauty of its holiness, would have been simply a perfect example of conduct but it could not have become our righteousness if His burial in the tomb of Joseph had been the end of all. It was essential for the confirmation of His life-teaching and His deathsuffering, that He should be raised from the dead. If he had not risen but were still among the dead, you might as well tell us that we preach to you a cunningly devised fable.

See, then, the power of His resurrection—it proves without a doubt the faith once delivered to the saints. Supported by infallible proofs it becomes itself the infallible proof of the authority, power and glory of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

I beg you further to notice that this proof had such power about it in the minds of the Apostles that they preached with singular boldness. These chosen witnesses had seen the Lord after His resurrection—one of them had put his finger into the print of the nails and others had eaten and drunk with Him. They were sure that they were not deceived. They knew that He was dead, for they had been present at His burial—they knew that He lived again, for they had heard Him speak and had seen Him eat a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb. The fact was as clear to them as it was wonderful. Peter and the rest of them, without hesitation, declared, “this Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”

They were sure that they saw the man who died on Calvary alive again and they could not but testify what they had heard and seen. The enemies of the faith wondered at the boldness with which these witnesses spoke. Theirs was the accent of conviction—for they testified what they knew of as fact. They had no suspicion lurking in the background. They were sure that Jesus had risen from the dead and this unquestionable certainty made them confident that He was, indeed, the Messiah and the Savior of men. The power of this fact upon those who believe it is great. But upon those who saw it as eyewitnesses it must have been inconceivably mighty!

I wonder not that they defied contradiction, persecution and even death. How could they disbelieve that of which they were so certain? How could they withhold their witness to a fact which was so important to the destiny of their fellow men? In the Apostles and the first disciples we have a cloud of witnesses to a fact more firmly attested than any other recorded in history—and that fact is the witness to the truth of our religion. Honest witnesses, in more than sufficient number, declare that Jesus Christ who died on Calvary and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did rise again from the dead. In the mouth of many witnesses the fact is established—and this fact established proves other blessed facts.

If the cloud of witnesses might not seem sufficient in itself, I see that cloud tinged with crimson. Reddened as by the setting sun, the cloud of witnesses in life becomes a cloud of martyrs in death. The disciples were put to cruel deaths asserting still the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. They and their immediate followers, never doubting, “counted not their lives dear to them,” that they might witness to this Truth of God. They suffered the loss of all things—were banished and were accounted the offscouring of all things—but they could not, and would not, contradict their faith.

They were nailed to crosses and bound to stakes to be burned. But the enthusiasm of their conviction was never shaken. Behold an array of martyrs reaching on through the centuries! Behold how they are all sure of the Gospel, because sure of their Lord’s endless life! Is not this a grand evidence of “the power of His resurrection”? The Book of Martyrs is a record of that power. The resurrection of Christ casts a sidelight upon the Gospel by proving its reality and literalness. There is a tendency in this generation to spirit away the Truth and in so doing lose both the Truth and its Spirit.

In these evil days fact is turned into myth and truth into opinion. Our Lord’s resurrection is a literal fact—when He rose from the dead He was no specter, ghost, or apparition. But as He was a real Man who died the cruel death of the Cross, so He was a real Man who rose again from the dead, bearing in His body the marks of the crucifixion. His appearance to His familiar companions was to them no dream of the night—no fevered imagination of enthusiastic minds. Jesus Christ took pains to make them sure of His real Presence and that He was really among them in His proper Person—

*“A Man there was, a real Man,  
Who once on Calvary died,  
That same blest Man arose from death—  
The mark is in His side!”*

There was as much reality about the rising of our Lord as about His death and burial. There is no fiction here. This literal fact gives reality to all that comes from Him and by Him. Justification is no mere easing of the conscience—it is a real arraying of the soul in righteousness. Adoption into the family of God is no fancy, but brings with it true and proper sonship. The blessings of the Gospel are substantial facts and not mere theological opinions. As the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was a plain visible matter of fact—so are the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul matters of actual experience and not the creatures of religious imagination.

Brethren, such is the evidencing power of the resurrection of Christ, that when every other argument fails your faith, you may find safe anchorage in this assured fact. The currents of doubt may bear you towards the rocks of mistrust. But when your anchor finds no other hold, it may grip the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This must be true. The witnesses are too many to have been deceived. And their patient deaths on account of their belief proved that they were not only honest men but good men who valued the Truth of God more than life. We know that Jesus rose from the dead—whatever else we are forced to question, we have no question on that score.

We may be tossed about upon the sea in reference to other statements, but we step to shore again and find terra firma in this unquestionable, firmly-established Truth—“The Lord is risen, indeed.” Oh, that any of you who are drifting may be brought to a resting place by this fact! If you doubt the possibility of your own pardon, this may aid you to believe—for Jesus lives. I read the other day of one who had greatly backslidden and grievously dishonored his Lord. But he heard a sermon upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead and it was life to him. Though he had known and believed that Truth before, yet he had never realized it vividly. After service he said to the minister, “Is it so, that our Lord Jesus has really risen from the dead and is yet alive? Then He can save me.”

By His Grace! A living Christ can say assuredly to you, “Your sins are forgiven you.” He is able now to breathe into you eternal life. The Lord is risen indeed—in this see the evidence of His power to save to the uttermost. From this first solid stone of the resurrection you may go, step by step, over the streams of doubt till you land on the other side fully assured of your salvation in Christ Jesus.

Thus, you see, there is an evidencing power in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may feel it now. You cannot have too much holy confidence. You cannot be too sure. He that died for you is alive and is making intercession for sinners. Believe that firmly and realize it vividly. Then you will be filled with rest of heart and will be bold to testify in the name of your Lord. The timid by nature will become lion-like in witnessing when the resurrection has borne to them overwhelming evidence of their Redeemer’s mission and power.  
II. We will dwell next UPON THE JUSTIFYING POWER OF HIS RESRECTION. Under the first head I compared the resurrection to a seal. Under this second head I must liken it to a note of acquittal, or a receipt. Our Lord’s rising from the dead was a discharge in full from the High Court of Justice and from all those liabilities which He had undertaken on our behalf.

Observe, first, that our Lord must have fully paid the penalty due to sin. He was discharged because He had satisfied the claim of justice. All that the Law could possibly demand was the fulfillment of the sentence, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” There is no getting away from that doom—life must be taken for sin committed. Christ Jesus is our Substitute and Sacrifice. He came into the world to vindicate the Law and He has achieved it by the offering of Himself. He has been dead and buried and He has now risen from the dead because He has endured death to the fullest and there remains no more to be done. Brothers and Sisters, consider this and let your hearts be filled with joy—the penalty which has come upon you through breaches of the Law is paid.

Yonder is the Receipt. Behold the Person of your risen Lord! He was your Hostage till the Law had been honored and Divine authority had been vindicated—that being done, an angel was sent from the Throne to roll back the stone and set the Hostage free. All who are in Him—and all are in Him who believe in Him—are set free by His being set free from the prison of the sepulcher—

*“He bore on the tree the ransom for me,*

*And now both the sinner and Surety are free”*Our Lord has blotted out the record which was against us and that in a most righteous way. Through the work of Jesus, God is just and the Justifier of him that believes. Jesus died for our sins but rose again for our justification. As the rising of the sun removes the darkness, so the rising of Christ has removed our sin. The power of the resurrection of Christ is seen in the justifying of every Believer. For the justification of the Representative is the virtual justification of all whom He represents.

When our Lord rose from the dead it was certified that the righteousness, which He came to work out, was finished. For what remained to be done? All was accomplished, and therefore He went up unto His Father’s side. Is He toiling there to finish a half-accomplished enterprise? No, “This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Our righteousness is a finished one, for Jesus quit the place of humiliation and arose to His reward. He cried upon the Cross, “It is finished!”—and His Word is true. The Father endorsed His claim by raising Him from the dead. Put on, therefore, O you faithful, this matchless robe of perfect righteousness! It is more than royal—it is Divine.

It is for you that this best robe is provided. Wear it and be glad. Remember that in Christ Jesus you are justified from all things. You are, in the sight of God, as righteous as if you had kept the Law. For your Covenant Head kept it. You are as justified as if you had been obedient unto death—for Jesus Christ obeyed the Law on your behalf. You are this day justified by Christ who is “the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.” Because He is delivered from the tomb, we are delivered from judgment and are sent forth as justified persons. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Oh, that a deep peace, profound as the serenity of God, may fall upon all our hearts as we see Jesus risen from the dead! His resurrection did not only prove our pardon and our justification but it proved our full acceptance. “He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Christ is never separated from His people, and therefore, wherever He is they are in Him. He is the Head. And as the Head, such are the members. I will suppose that a dead body lies before us. See, the head comes to life. It opens its eyes. It lifts itself. It rises from the ground. It moves to the table. I need not tell you that the arms, the feet and the whole body must go with the head. It cannot be that there shall be a risen head and yet the members of the body shall still be dead!

When God accepted Christ, my Head, He accepted me. When He glorified my Head, He made me a partaker of that glory through my Representative. The infinite delight of the Father in His Only-begotten is an infinite delight in all the members of His mystical body. I pray that you may feel the power of His resurrection in this respect and become flooded with delight by the conviction that you are accepted, beloved, and delighted in by the Lord God. The resurrection will make your heart dance for joy if you fully see the pardon, justification and acceptance which it guarantees you. Oh that the Holy Spirit may now take of the things of Christ’s resurrection and apply them to us with justifying power!

III. Thirdly, let us now notice THE LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.  
This will be seen if we perceive that our Lord has life in Himself. I showed you this earlier—in the fact that He raised Himself from the dead. He took up the life which He laid down. He only has immortality— essential and underived. Remember how He said, “I am the resurrection and the life”? Do not say, “I believe in Christ and desire life.” You have it. Christ and life are not two things. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” If you have Jesus Christ, you have the resurrection. Oh, that you might now realize what power lies in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life! All the power there is in Christ is there for His people.  
“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and “of His fullness have all we received.” Christ has a life in Himself and He makes that life flow into every part of His mystical body according to His own word, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Triumph, therefore, that you possess as a Believer this day, that same life which is inherent in the Person of your glorious Covenant Head.  
Moreover, our Lord has power to quicken whom He will. If the Lord Jesus Christ will, this morning, speak to the most cold heart in this assembly, it will glow with heavenly life. If the salvation of souls depended upon the preacher, nobody would be saved. But when the preacher’s Master comes with him—however feeble his utterance—the life flashes forth and the dead are raised. See how the dry bones come together! Behold how, at the coming of the Divine Wind they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army! Our risen Redeemer is the Lord and Giver of life. What joy to Christian workers is found in the life-giving power of the resurrection! The warrant of Jesus will run through the domain of death and set dead Lazarus free. Where is he this morning? Lord, call him!  
This life, whenever it is imparted, is new life. In reading the four Evangelists have you ever noticed the difference between Jesus after resurrection and before? A French Divine has written a book entitled “The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory.” When I bought it, I hardly knew what the subject might be. But I soon perceived that it was the life of Jesus on earth after He was risen from the dead. That was, indeed, a glorious life. He feels no more suffering, weakness, weariness, reproach, or poverty—He is no more mocked or opposed by men. He is in the world but He scarcely seems to touch it and it does not at all touch Him.  
He was of another world and only a temporary sojourner on this globe to which He evidently did not belong. When we believe in Jesus we receive a new life and rise to a higher state. The spiritual life owes nothing to the natural life—it is from another source and goes in another direction. The old life bears the image of the first and earthy Adam. The second life bears the image of the second and heavenly Adam. The old life remains, but becomes to us a kind of death—the new life which God gives is the true life, which is part of the new creation and links us to the heavenly and Divine. To this, I say, the old life is greatly opposed. But that evil life, by God’s Grace, does not get the upper hand.  
Wonderful is the change worked by the new birth! Faculties that were in you before are purged and elevated. But at the same time, new spiritual faculties are conferred and a new heart and a right spirit are put within you. Wonder at this—that the risen Christ is able to give us an entirely new life! May you know, in this respect, the power of His resurrection! May you know the peace, the repose, the power of your risen Lord! May you, like He, be a stranger here, soon expecting to depart unto the Father! Before His death our Lord experienced stress because His work was unaccomplished—after His death He was at ease—because His work was done.  
Brethren, we may enter into His rest, for we are complete in Him! We are working for our Lord as He was for His Father during the forty days. But yet the righteousness in which we are accepted is finished and therefore we find rest in Him.  
Once more—the resurrection of Christ is operating at this present time with a quickening power on all who hear the Word aright. The sun is, to the vegetable world, a great source of growth. In this month of April he goes forth with life in his beams and we see the result. The buds are bursting, the trees are putting on their summer dress, the flowers are smiling and even the seeds which we buried in the earth are beginning to feel the vivifying warmth. They see not the lord of day but they feel his smile. Over what an enormous territory is the returning sun continually operating! How potent are his forces when he crosses the line and lengthens the day!  
Such is the risen Christ. In the grave He was like the sun in His winter solstice but He crossed the line in His resurrection. He has brought us all the hopes of Spring and is bringing us the joys of Summer. He is quickening many at this hour and will yet quicken myriads. This is the power with which the missionary goes forth to sow. This is the power in which the preacher at home continues to scatter the seed. The risen Christ is the great Producer of harvests. By the power of His resurrection men are raised from their death in sin to eternal life.  
I said eternal life, for wherever Jesus gives life, it is everlasting life. “Christ being risen from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him.” And as we have been raised in the likeness of His resurrection, so are we raised into a life over which death has no more dominion. We shall not die again but the water which Jesus gives us shall be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life.  
I wish I could venture further to unveil this secret force and still more fully reveal to you the power of our Lord’s resurrection. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy upon which you must depend when teaching or preaching. It must all be “according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” I want you to feel that power today. I would have you feel eternal life throbbing in your bosoms, filling you with glory and immortality!  
Are you feeling cast down? Are your surroundings like those of a morgue? When you return will you seem to go home to endure the rottenness and corruption of profanity and lewdness? Your remedy will lie in eternal life flooding you with its torrents and bearing you above these evil influences. May you not only have life but have it more abundantly and so be vigorous enough to throw off the baneful influences of this evil world!  
IV. The last point is THE CONSOLING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.  
This consoling power should be felt as to all departed saints. We are often summoned to the house of mourning in this Church. We seldom pass a week without one or two deaths of beloved ones. Here is our comfort— Jesus says, “Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise.”  
*“As the Lord our Savior rose  
So all His followers must.”*  
He is the first fruits from among the dead. The cemeteries are crowded, precious dust is closely heaped together. But as surely as Jesus rose from the tomb of Joseph all those who are in Him shall rise also. Though bodies may be consumed in the fire, or ground to powder, or sucked up by plants and fed upon by animals. Though they are made to pass though ten thousand changeful processes—yet there are no difficulties where there is a God. He that gave us bodies when we had none can restore those bodies when they are pulverized and scattered to the four winds. We sorrow not as those that are without hope. We know where the souls of the godly ones are—they are “forever with the Lord.” We know where their bodies will be when the clarion blast shall wake the dead and the sepulcher shall give up its spoils. Sweet is the consolation which comes to us from the empty tomb of Jesus. “God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His own power.”  
Here, too, is comfort in our inward deaths. In order that we should know the resurrection of Christ we must be made conformable unto His death. Have we not to die many deaths? Have you ever felt the sentence of death in yourself that you might not trust in yourself? Have you not seen all your fancied beauty decay and all your strength wither “like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown”? Have not all your carnal hopes perished and all your resolves turned to dust? If any of you are undergoing that process today, I hope you will go through with it till the sword of the Spirit has slain you.  
You must die before you can be raised from the dead. If you are undergoing the process of crucifixion with Christ—which means a painful, lingering death within—remember that this is the needful way to resurrection. How can you know your Lord’s resurrection except by knowing His death? You must be buried with Him to rise with Him. Is not this sweet consolation for a bitter experience?  
I think there is here great consolation for those of us who mourn because the cause of Christ seems to be in an evil case. I may say to the enemy, “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” Alas, I cry with the holy woman, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” In many a pulpit the precious blood no longer speaks. They have taken the heart out of the doctrine of propitiation and left us nothing but the name of it. Their false philosophy has overlaid the Gospel and crushed out its life, so far as they are concerned. They boast that we are powerless—our protest is despised, error shows her brazen forehead and seizes the strongholds of truth.  
Yet we despair not—no, we do not even fear. If the cause of Christ were dead and buried—and the wise men had fixed the stone and set their seal and appointed their guards—regardless, at the appointed hour, the Lord’s Truth would rise again. I am not uneasy about ultimate issues. It is the mischief of the time being that grieves me. But the Lord will yet avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him. Jesus must live if they kill Him. He must rise if they bury Him—herein lies our consolation. This Truth affords choice consolation to persecuted saints.  
In Paul’s day to be a Christian was a costly matter. Imprisonment was the lightest of their trials—stripes and tortures of every kind were their portion. “Christians to the lions!” was the cry heard in the amphitheatre. And nothing pleased the people better unless it was to see saints of God smeared with pitch from head to foot and set on fire. Did they not call themselves the lights of the world? Such were the brutal pleasantries of the Romans. Here was the backbone of saintly comfort—they would rise again and share in the glory of their Lord forever! Though they might find a living grave between a lion’s jaws, they would not be destroyed—even the body would live again—for Jesus lived again—even the Crucified One in whom they trusted.  
My Brethren, my text is like a honeycomb dripping with honey. It has in it comfort for the ages to come. There will be a living issue for these dead times. Do you see that train steaming along the iron way? See, it plunges into a cavern in yonder hill! You have now lost sight of it. Has it perished? As on an angel’s wing you fly to the top of the hill and you look down on the other side. There it comes steaming forth again from the tunnel, bearing its living freight to its destination. So, whenever you see the Church of God apparently plunging into a cavern of disaster or a grave of defeat, think not that the spirit of the age has swallowed it up!  
Have faith in God! His Truth will be uppermost yet—  
*“The might with the right,  
And the right with the might shall be—  
And, come what there may  
To stand in the way,  
That day the world shall see.”*  
The opposition of men might have proved a dark den in which the cause of God should have been hopelessly buried. But in the resurrection of our Lord we see a cavern turned into a tunnel and a way pierced through death itself. “Who are you, O great mountain?” The Alps are pierced— God’s way is made clear. He triumphs over all difficulties. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together—for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”  
That is my close. I desire that you should feel resurrection power. We have many technical Christians who know the phrases of godliness but know not the power of godliness. We have ritualistic Christians who treasure the outward but know not the power. We have many moral religionists, but they also know not the power. We are pestered with conventional, regulation Christians. Oh, yes, no doubt we are Christians. But we are not enthusiasts, fanatics, nor even as this bigot. Such men have a name to live and are dead. They have a form of godliness but deny the power of it.  
I beseech you, my Hearers, be not content with a Truth of God till you feel the force of it. Do not praise the spiritual food set before you, but eat of it till you know its power to nourish. Do not even talk of Jesus till you know His power to save. God grant that you may know the powers of the world to come, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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DO YOU KNOW HIM?  
NO. 552

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1864, BY THE REV. C. H SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“That I may know Him.”***Php 3:10***.**

THE object of the Apostle’s life—that for which he sacrificed everything—country, kindred, honor, comfort, liberty and life itself, was that he might know Christ. Observe that this is not Paul’s prayer as an unconverted man—that he may know Christ and so be saved—for it follows upon the previous supplication that he might win Christ and be found in Him. This is the desire of one who has been saved, who enjoys the full conviction that his sins are pardoned and that he is in Christ. It is only the regenerated and saved man who can feel the desire, “That I may know Him.” Are you astonished that a saved man should have such a desire as this? A moment’s reflection will remove your astonishment.

Imagine for a moment that you are living in the age of the Roman emperors. You have been captured by Roman soldiers and dragged from your native country. You have been sold for a slave, stripped, whipped, branded, imprisoned and treated with shameful cruelty. At last you are appointed to die in the amphitheatre, to make holiday for a tyrant. The populace assemble with delight. There they are, tens of thousands of them, gazing down from the living sides of the spacious Coliseum.

You stand alone and naked, armed only with a single dagger—a poor defense against gigantic beasts. A ponderous door is drawn up by machinery and there rushes forth the monarch of the forest—a huge lion. You must slay him or be torn to pieces. You are absolutely certain that the conflict is too stern for you and that the sure result must and will be that those terrible teeth will grind your bones and drip with your blood. You tremble. Your joints are loosed. You are paralyzed with fear, like the timid deer when the lion has dashed it to the ground. But what is this? O wonder of mercy!—a deliverer appears!

A great unknown leaps from among the gazing multitude and confronts the savage monster. He quails not at the roaring of the devourer, but dashes upon him with terrible fury, till, like a whipped cur, the lion slinks towards his den, dragging himself along in pain and fear. The hero lifts you up, smiles into your bloodless face, whispers comfort in your ears and bids you be of good courage, for you are free. Do you not think that there would arise at once in your heart a desire to know your deliverer? As the guards conducted you into the open street, and you breathed the cool, fresh air, would not the first question be, “Who was my deliverer, that I may fall at his feet and bless him?”

You are not, however, informed, but instead of it you are gently led away to a noble mansion, where your many wounds are washed and healed with salve of rarest power. You are clothed in sumptuous apparel. You are made to sit down at a feast. You eat and are satisfied. You rest upon the softest down. The next morning you are attended by servants who guard you from evil and minister to your good. Day after day, week after week, your wants are supplied. You live like a courtier. There is nothing that you can ask which you do not receive.

I am sure that your curiosity would grow more and more intense till it would ripen into an insatiable craving. You would scarcely neglect an opportunity of asking the servants, “Tell me, who does all this, who is my noble benefactor, for I must know him?” “Well, but,” they would say, “is it not enough for you that you are delivered from the lion?” “No,” you say, “it is for that very reason that I pant to know him.” “Your wants are richly supplied—why are you vexed by curiosity as to the hand which gave you the gift? If your garment is worn out, there is another. Long before hunger oppresses you, the table is well loaded. What more do you want?” But your reply is, “It is because I have no wants, that, therefore, my soul longs and yearns even to hungering and to thirsting that I may know my generous loving friend.”

Suppose that as you wake up one morning, you find lying on your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, a ring sparkling with jewels and engraved with a tender inscription, a bouquet of flowers bound about with a love-motto? Your curiosity now knows no bounds. But you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but a thousand deeds of love which you did not see, which were higher and greater still as proofs of his affection. You are told that he was wounded and imprisoned and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great that death itself could not overcome it—you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is, there you shall be.

His honors you shall share and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why, I think you would say, “Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, tell me who he is and what he is.” And if they said, “But it is enough for you to know that he loves you and to have daily proofs of his goodness,” you would say, “No, these love-tokens increase my thirst. If you see him, tell him I am sick of love. The flagons which he scuds me and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for awhile with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him! I cannot live without knowing him. His goodness makes me thirst and pant, and faint and even die, that I may know him.”

Have I imagined emotions which would not be natural? I think not. The most cool and calculating would be warmed with desires like these. I think what I have now pictured before you will wake the echoes in your breasts and you will say, “Ah, it is even so! It is because Christ loved me and gave Himself for me that I want to know Him. It is because He has shed His blood for me and has chosen me that I may be one with Him forever that my soul desires a fuller acquaintance with Him. “Now may God the Holy Spirit, very graciously lead me onward that I may also quicken in you the desire to know Him.

I. Beloved, let us PASS BY THAT CROWD OF OUTER-COURT WORSHIPPERS WHO ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING CHRIST.  
I do not mean the ungodly and profane! We will not consider them just now—they are altogether strangers and foreigners to Him—I mean children of God—the visible saints. How many there are of these whom I must call outer-court worshippers, for they are strangers to this panting to know Him. They can say with Paul, “That I may win Him and be found in Him”—that they do want. But this higher wish, “That I may know Him,” has not stirred their hearts. How many Brothers and Sisters we know who are content to know Christ’s historic life! They read the Evangelists and they are charmed with the perfect beauty of the Savior’s history. “Never man spoke like this Man,” they say. And they confess that never man acted with such love as He did.  
They know all the incidents of His life, from His manger to His Cross. But they do not know Him. They are as men who have read “Caesar’s Commentaries,” but who have never seen Caesar. They know the battles which Caesar fought. They can even recognize the mantle which Caesar wore “that day he overcame the Nervii,” but they do not know Caesar himself. The Person of the Lord Jesus is as much hidden from their eyes us the golden pot of manna when concealed in the ark. They know the life of Christ, but not Christ the Life. They admire His way among men, but they see Him not as the Way.  
Others there are who know Christ’s doctrine and prize it, too, but they know not Him. All which He taught is dear to them. Orthodoxy—for this they would burn at Smithfield, or lay down their necks at Tower Hill! Many of them are well-instructed and Divinely-illuminated in the doctrine of Christ. And the wonder is that they should stop there, because, Beloved, it does seem to me when I begin to know a man’s teaching, that the next thing is the desire to know his person. Addison, in one of the “Spectators,” tells us that the reason why so many books are printed with the portraits of the authors is just this—that as a man reads a book, he feels a desire to know what sort of appearance the author had.  
This, indeed, is very natural. If you have ever been refreshed under a minister’s printed sermons. If you have at any time received any benefit from his words, I know you have said, “I would like to see that man. I would like to hear the truth flow hot and fresh from his living lips. I would like to know just how he said that sentence, and how that passage sounded as it came from his earnest heart.”  
My Beloved, surely if you know the doctrine of Jesus, if you have so been with Christ as to sit at His feet and hear what He has to say, you must, I hope, have had some longings to know Him—to know His Person. And if you have, you will have had to pass by multitudes of followers of Jesus who rest satisfied with His words, but forget that He is, Himself, “THE WORD.”  
Beloved, there are others—and against them I bring no complaint. They go as far as they can—they are delighted with Christ’s example. Christ’s Character is in their esteem the mirror of all perfection. They desire to walk in His footsteps. They listen to His Sermon upon the Mount. They are enchanted with it—as well they may be. They pray to be obedient in all things to Christ, as their Master and their Lord. They do well. Mark, I am finding no fault with any of these who prize the history, or who value the doctrine, or who admire the precept. But I want more. I do want, Beloved, that you and I should “know HIM.”  
I love His precepts, but I love HIM better! Sweet is the water from Bethlehem’s well. And well worth the struggle of the armed men to win but a bucket from it. But the well itself is better and deserves all Israel’s valor to defend it. As the source is ever more valuable than the stream, so is Christ ever better than the best words of His lips, or the best deeds of His hands. I want to know Him. I do care for His actions—my soul would sit down and admire those masterly works of holy art—His miracles of humiliation, of suffering, of patience and of holy charity. But better far I love the hands which worked these master-works, the lips which spoke these goodly Words and the heart which heaved with that matchless love which was the cause of all. Yes, Beloved, we must get farther than Immanuel’s achievements, however glorious—we must come to “KNOW HIM.”  
Most Believers rest perfectly at ease with knowing Christ’s Sacrifice. They see Jesus as the great High Priest, laying a great Sacrifice upon the altar for their sins and with their whole heart they accept His Atonement. By faith they know that all their sins are taken away by precious blood. This is a most blessed and hallowed attainment, I will grant you. But it is not every Christian who perceives that Christ was not only the Offerer of a sacrifice, but was Himself the Sacrifice, and therefore loves Him as such. Priest, Altar, Victim—Christ was everything! He gathers up all in Himself and when I see that He loved me and gave Himself for me, it is not enough to know this fact—I want to know Him, the glorious Person who does and is all this.  
I want to know the Man who thus gave Himself for me. I want to behold the Lamb once slain for me. I want to rest upon the bosom which covers the heart which was pierced with the spear. I pray Him to kiss me with the kisses of that mouth which cried, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” I love Calvary, the scene of woe, but I love Christ better, the great Object of that agony. And even His Cross and all His sufferings, dear though these must ever be to the Christian mind, only occupy a second place—the first seat is for Himself—His Person, His Deity and Humanity.  
Thus, you see, we have to leave a great many Believers behind. Nor have we enumerated all, for I believe that even some of those saints who have received Grace to look for the coming of Christ, yet in their vision of His coming too much forget Him. Is it not possible for men to pant for the Second Advent as to lose sight of Him who is to make that advent? So to long for a millennium that I may forget Him who is to reign King of kings? So to pant after that Glory of Israel that I may forget Him who is Israel’s Glory? Anywhere short of knowing Him, I would not have you stop, Beloved. And even when you know Him, I would urge you still to be impelled with the same desire and to press forward, crying with the Apostle, “That I may know Him.”  
Beloved, how many there are who have heard of Christ and read about Christ and that is enough for them! But it is not enough for me and it should not be enough for you. The Apostle Paul did not say, “I have heard of Him, on whom I have believed,” but, “I know whom I have believed.” To hear about Christ may damn you—it may be a savor of death unto death to you. You have heard of Him with the ear—but it is essential that you know Him in order that you may be partakers of eternal life. My dear Hearers, be not content unless you have this as your soul’s present portion.  
Others there are who have been persuaded by the judgment and encouragement of others that they know something about the great Redeemer. They do not know Him, but still they are persuaded by others that they have an interest in Him. Let me warn you of second-hand spirituality! It is a rotten, soul-deceiving deception. Beware of all esteeming of yourself according to the thoughts of others or you will be ruined.  
Another man’s opinion of me may have great influence over me—I have heard of a man in perfectly good health killed by the opinion of others. Several of his friends had foolishly agreed to play a practical trick on him, whereupon one of them met him and said, “How ill you look this morning.” He did not feel so. He was very much surprised at the remark. When he met the next, who said to him, “Oh, dear, how bad you look,” he began to think there might be something in it. And as he turned round the corner, a third person said to him, “What a sight you are ! How altered from what you used to be!” He went home ill, he took to his bed and died.  
So goes the story and I should not marvel if it really did occur. Now, if such might be the effect of persuasion and supposed belief in the sickness of a man, how much more readily may men be persuaded into the idea of spiritual health! A Believer meets you and by his treatment seems to say, “I welcome you as a dear Brother”—and he means it, too. You are baptized and received into Church fellowship and so everybody thinks that you must be a follower of Christ. And yet you may not know Him. Oh, I do pray you—do not be satisfied with being persuaded into something like an assurance that you are in Him but do not know Him—know Him for yourself.  
There are many who I hope will be saved before long. But I am in great doubt of them, because they can only say they half think they know Christ. They do not quite believe in Him, but they do not disbelieve in Him. They halt between two opinions. Ah, dear Hearer, that is a very dangerous place to stand! The borderland is the devil’s hunting ground. Undecided souls are fair game for the great fowler. God give you once and for all the true decision by which, through Grace, you shall know Him. Do not be satisfied with thinking you know Him. Hoping you know Him, but know Him.  
Oh, it is nothing to have heard about Him, to have talked about Him, to have eaten and have drank with Him, to have preached Him, or even to have worked miracles in His name. To have been charmed by His eloquence, to have been stirred with the story of His love, to have been moved to imitate Him—this shall gain you nothing unless you win Him and are found in Him. Seek with the Apostle, to give up everything of your own righteousness and all other objects and aims in life and say, “This I seek after, that I may know Him.” Thus much, on the first point. Leaving those behind who do not know Him, let us make an advance.  
II. Secondly, let us DRAW CURTAIN AFTER CURTAIN WHICH SHALL ADMIT US TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST.  
Did you ever visit the manufactory of splendid porcelain at Sevres? I have done so. If anybody should say to me, “Do you know the manufactory at Sevres?” I should say, “Yes, I do and no, I do not. I know it, for I have seen the building. I have seen the rooms in which the articles are exhibited for sale and I have seen the museum and model room. But I do not know the factory as I would like to know it, for I have not seen the process of manufacture and have not been admitted into the workshops, as some are.”  
Suppose I had seen, however, the process of the molding of the clay and the laying on of the rich designs? If anybody should still say to me, “Do you know how they manufacture those wonderful articles?” I should very likely still be compelled to say, “No, I do not, because there are certain secrets, certain private rooms into which neither friend nor foe can be admitted, lest the process should be open to the world.” So, you see, I might say I knew, and yet might not half know. And when I half knew, still there would be so much left that I might be compelled to say, “I do not know.” How many different ways there are of knowing a person—and even so there are all these different ways of knowing Christ, so that you may keep on all your lifetime, still wishing to get into another room and another room, nearer and nearer to the great secret, still panting to “know Him.”  
Good Rutherford says, “I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by, in Christ, that we never shut and new foldings in love with Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love. There are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can—He will be won by labor.”  
To begin with. We know a person when we recognize him. You know the Queen. Well, I do. I recollect seeing her and if I were to see any quantity of ladies, I think I should know which was the Queen and which was not. You may say honestly that you know her to that extent. Beloved, every Christian must in this sense know Christ. You must know Him by a Divine illumination so as to know who He is and what He is. When Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Whom do you say that I am,” he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And the Lord replied, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.”  
It is an early step in this knowledge of Christ, to know and to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. To know that Christ is God, Divine to me. That Christ is Man—Brother to me—bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. And that as such He is a sin-subduing Savior. That He is for me an Intercessor, pleading before the Throne. That He is my Prophet, Priest and King—in this sense I trust that most of you know Him. If you do not, breathe the silent prayer now, “Lord, help me that I may know Him.” But this knowledge of recognition is comparatively a low attainment, one of the lowest rounds of the ladder of light.  
In the second place, a Believer knows Christ to a higher degree when he knows Him by practical experience at acquaintance with what He does. For instance, I know Christ as a Cleanser. They tell me He is a Refiner, that He cleanses from spots. He has washed me in His precious blood and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He clothes the naked—He has covered me with a garment of righteousness and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He is a Breaker and that He breaks fetters—He has set my soul at liberty and therefore I know Him. They tell me that He is a King and that He reigns over sin—He has subdued my enemies beneath His feet and I know Him in that Character.  
They tell me He is a Shepherd—I know Him, for I am His sheep. They say He is a Door—I have entered in through Him and I know Him as a Door. They say He is Food—my spirit feeds on Him as on the Bread of Heaven and, therefore, I know Him as such. You know if anyone says, “Do you know doctor So-and-So?” it is a very satisfactory answer if you can reply, “Oh, yes, I know him, for he attended me the last time that I was ill.” There is more knowledge in that, than if on could only say, “Oh, yes, I know him—he wears such-and-such a hat,” or “he is a man of such-andsuch an appearance.” So, Christian, there is a second and higher step to know Christ—when you have experienced in your own soul that He is just what God has revealed Him to be.  
But we know a man in a better sense than this when we are on speaking terms with him. “Do you know So-and-So?” “Yes,” you say, “I not only know him by name, so as to recognize him. I not only know him as a tradesman having dealt with him, but I know him because when we pass each other in the morning, we exchange a word or two. And if I had anything to say upon matters—any request to make—I should feel no difficulty about asking him.” Well now, the Christian knows His Lord in this sense, too. He has, every day, official communication with Christ, He is on speaking terms with Him.  
There may be persons here, perhaps, who know the Queen in a sense in which I do not know her—perhaps they speak to her. They have so done—I have never done that. They go beyond me there. But you see, dear Friends

this is not a very great thing because you may be on speaking terms with a man—you may not know much of him for all that. So you may be in the habit of daily prayer and you may talk with Christ every morning and every evening—but you may know exceedingly little of Him. You are on speaking terms with Him. But there is something beyond this, very far beyond this! I might say that I know a man merely because I meet him every day and ask him for what I want and understand that he is kind and generous. But how shallow is such an acquaintance, for I do not know his private character nor his inward heart. Even so a Believer may have constant dealings with Christ in his prayers and in his praises and yet, for all that, he may have only gone a certain distance and may have need still to pray, “That I may know Him.”  
But you are said to know a person better still when he invites you to his house. At Christmas time there is a family party and a romp—and he asks you there and you are like one of his children and enter into all their sports around the fireside. And you indulge, as they do, in the genialities of social life. You are asked again. You go there pretty often. In fact, if there is a happy evening in that house they generally expect to see friend So-and-So there. Well, now, that is better. We are getting now into something like knowing a man.  
And I do trust there are many of you, Beloved, who have got as far as this with regard to your Divine Lord. Christ has entertained you with some rare visits from His gracious Presence. He brought you into His banqueting house and His banner over you was love. When He manifested Himself, He did it unto you as He did not unto the world. He was pleased in the majesty of His condescension, to take you aside and show you His hands and His side. He called you “Friend.” He treated you as such and permitted you to enjoy your sweets of being one of the family. Ah, but you may go into a man’s house as a constant visitor and yet you may not know him—that is to say, not in the highest sense.  
You speak to the man’s wife and say, “Your husband is a marvelously charming man. What a cheerful, joyful, spirited man he is! He never seems to have any depressions of spirit and experiences no changes whatever.” She shakes her head, and she says, “Ah, you do not know him, you do not know him as I do.” Because she sees him at all times and at all hours she can read the very heart of the man. That Christian has grown much in Grace who has advanced not only to be the friend of Christ, having occasional fellowship with Him, but who comes to recognize his marriage union with the Person of his Lord and of whom it can be said, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. And He will show them His Covenant.” Now we have the intimacy of love with its perfect frankness, nearness, sweetness, joyousness, delight! The rending away of every separating veil makes the communion to be as near as it well can be this side of the black river. But a Christian may get farther than this!  
Even the spouse may not know her husband. The most loving wife who ever entered into the cares of her husband must have discovered that there is a something which separates his experience from her powers of comprehension. Luther’s wife, Catherine, was, of all women, the wife for Luther. But there were times in Luther’s gigantic tribulations when he must leave Kate behind. There were extraordinary times within him— times both of ecstatic joy—when, like a great angel, he stretched his mighty wings and flew right up to Heaven! And there were times of awful misery when he seemed to sink down to the very depths of Hell. And in either case, no other heart could keep pace with him.  
Then it was Christ alone who had communion with him. And a Christian may so grow in Grace as to become identified with Christ, a member of His body—not so much married to Him as a part of Him. He becomes a member of the great body of Christ so that he suffers with Christ. He sympathizes with Jesus. His heart beats to the same dolorous tune. His veins swell with the same floods of grief—or else his eyes sparkle with that same gleam of joy, according to the Master’s Word—“That My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.”  
Well, have not you waded out of your depth, some of you? I have certainly got out of my own. I feel as if the Master might come on this platform, look round on many of us and say, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” For truly, even in the minor sense, though I trust we are saved, though we have believed in Jesus, yet we have not reached the height of this great text—“That I may know Him.”  
III. Having taken you so far, let us SIT DOWN A FEW MINUTES AND CONSIDER WHAT SORT OF KNOWLEDGE THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS—“That I may know Him.” Then it is clear, if I know Him I shall have a very vivid sense of His Personality. “That I may know Him.” He will not be to me a myth, a vision, a spirit, but a Person, a real, solid Person, as much real as I am myself, or as my dearest friend can be to me. My Soul, never be satisfied with a shadowy Christ. My Heart, never be content until He has embraced your soul and proved to you that He is the lover of His people.  
This knowledge, then, must be a knowledge of Him in His Personality. Then, Beloved, it must be a personal knowledge on our part. I cannot know Christ through another person’s brains. I cannot love Him with another man’s heart and I cannot see Him with another man’s eyes. Heaven’s delight is, “My eyes shall see Him and not another.” These eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. Well, Beloved, if this is Heaven, we certainly cannot do without a personal sight of Christ here. I am so afraid of living in a second-hand religion. God forbid that I should get a biographical experience! Lord save us from having borrowed communion. No, I must know Him myself! O God, let me not be deceived in this! I must know Him without fancy or proxy. I must know Him on my own account.  
And now these few thoughts upon what sort of knowledge we must have. It must be an intelligent knowledge—I must know Him. I must know His Natures, Divine and Human. I must know His offices—I must know His attributes—I must know His works—I must know His shame—I must know His Glory—for I do not know Him if He is merely a subject of passion and not of intellect. I must let my head consciously meditate upon Him until I own something like an idea of Him that I may, “Comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.”  
Then I must have an affectionate knowledge of Him. And indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him. As it is said of some men that there is such a charm about them that if you once get into their company you cannot criticize any longer, but must admire—so you feel with Christ. It is said of Garibaldi, that if you are in his society he charms all, so that even malice and slander must be silent in his presence. Infinitely, supremely, so is it with Christ! Being near Him, His love warms our hearts till we glow with intense love to Him.  
Then I shall find, if I know Christ, that this is a satisfying knowledge. When I know Christ my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have found that which my spirit panted after. “This is that Bread whereof if a man eats he shall never hunger.” At the same time it is an exciting knowledge. The more I know of Christ, the more I shall want to know. The deeper I plunge, the greater the deeps which will be revealed. The higher I climb, the loftier will be the summits which invite my eager footsteps. I shall want more as I get more. My spiritual thirst will increase, though in another sense it will be entirely quenched.  
And this knowledge of Christ will be a most happy one! In fact, so happy that sometimes it will completely bear me up above all trials, doubts and sorrows. And it will, while I enjoy it, make me something more than, “Man that is born of a woman who is of few days and full of trouble,” for it will fling about me the immortality of the ever-living Savior and gird me with the golden girdle of His eternal happiness. To be near to Christ is to be near to the pearly gates of the golden-streeted city. Say not, “Jerusalem, my happy home, my labors have an end in you,” but say, “Jesus, You are my Rest and when I have You, my spirit is at peace.” I might thus keep on speaking in praise of this knowledge, but I will not.  
Only permit me to say what a refreshing, what a sanctifying knowledge is this, to know Him! When the Laodicean Church was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, how did Christ seek her revival? Did He send her precious doctrines? Did He send her excellent precepts? Mark you, He came Himself, for thus it is said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That is a cure for it all, you see. No matter how lukewarm, though God may say, “I will spew you out of My mouth,” yet, if Christ comes, that is the cure! The Presence of Christ with His Church puts away all her sicknesses.  
When the disciples of Christ were at sea in a storm, do you remember how He comforted them? Did He send them an angel? No. “It is I, do not be afraid.” And when they knew Him they had no more fears. They were assembled one night, “the doors being shut for fear of the Jews.” How did He comfort them? Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, “Peace be unto you.” There was Thomas, full of doubts and fears. How did Jesus Christ take away his doubts? “Reach here your finger and behold My hands. And reach here your hand and thrust it into My side.” Oh, it is Christ, it is Christ who cures all!  
The company of Christ is the only thing which a Christian wants. I will undertake that if his heart is like an iceberg, as soon as Jesus comes, it shall flame like Vesuvius. His spirit shall be dead and like a rotten corpse. But if Jesus comes he shall leap like a hart and become strong as a young unicorn. Your Presence makes me like the chariots of Amminadib! Now do not think I am talking what I do not know. Do not imagine that I am talking mere fanatical slip-slop which I cannot prove. I do assert (and God who searches all hearts knows how true this is)—I do assert that from the depths of doubt, of dullness, of worldliness—I have leaped in one moment into love and life and holy enthusiasm when Jesus Christ has manifested Himself to me.  
I cannot describe the difference between my spirit, water-logged, wormeaten, ready to sink to the bottom without Christ—and that same spirit like a strong staunch ship, with sails full, with favorable wind, speeding into harbor with a golden freight. Like yon poor little bird which some cruel boy has torn from the nest and almost killed—it is not fledged yet and cannot fly—and it lies down to die. It is soon trampled in the mire in the streets—that is my heart without Christ.  
But see that other bird! The cage door is opened, its wings vibrate, it sings with all its might and flies up to talk with the sun—that is my heart when I have the conscious Presence of my Lord Jesus Christ! I only bring in my own consciousness because I do not know yours. But I think I will now venture to say that every Believer here will admit it is the same with him—  
**“Midst darkest shades if He appears  
My dawning is begun!  
He is my soul’s bright morning star,  
And He my rising sun.”**  
IV. I shall close by urging you, dearly Beloved, who know the Lord to take this desire of the Apostle, and by exhorting you—make it your own, “That I may know Him.” I wish I had time this morning—time will fly—I wish I had time to urge and press you Believers onward to seek to know Him. Paul, you see, gave up everything for this—you will be seeking what is worth having. There can be no mistake about this. If Paul will renounce all, there must be a reward which is worthy of the sacrifice. If you have any fears—if you seek Christ and find Him—they will be removed. You complain that you do not feel the guilt of sin, that you cannot humble yourself enough. The sight of Christ is the very best means of setting sin in its true colors. There is no repenting like that which comes from a look from Christ’s eyes—the Lord turned and looked upon Peter and he went out and wept bitterly. So it is not a sight of the Law—it is the sight of Christ looking upon us which will break our hearts.  
There is nothing like this to fill you with courage. When Dr. Andrew Reed found some difficulties in the founding of one of his orphan asylums, he sat down and drew upon a little piece of paper the Cross, and then he said to himself, “What? Despair in the face of the Cross?” And then he drew a ring round the Cross and wrote in it, “nil desperandum!” and took it for his coat of arms. Oh, there cannot be any despair in the presence of the Cross! Dying Lamb, did You endure the Cross, despising the shame—and shall I talk of difficulties when Your Glory is in the way? God forbid!  
O holy Face bedewed with bloody sweat, I pledge myself in Your solemn and awful Presence, that though this face of mine should be bedewed with sweat of the like sort to accomplish any labor upon which You shall put me! By Your will and in Your strength, I will not shrink from the task. A sight of Christ, Brethren, will keep you from despondency and doubts and despair. A sight of Christ!  
How shall I stir you to it? It will fire you to duty. It will deliver you from temptation. It will, in fact, make you like He. A man is known by his company. And if you have become acquainted with Christ, and know Him, you will be sure to reflect His light. It is because the moon has converse with the sun that she has any light for this dark world’s night. And if you talk with Christ, the Sun, He will shine on you so gloriously, that you, like the moon, shall reflect His light and the dark night of this world shall be enlightened by your radiance. The Lord help us to know Him!  
But I do seem, this morning, to have been talking to you about Him and not to have brought Him forward. O that I knew how to introduce you to Him! You who do not love Him—O that I could make you seek after Him! But you who do love Him and have trusted in Him—O that I could make you hunger and thirst until you were filled with Him! There He is, nailed to His Cross—suffering—oh how much He suffers for you! There He is, risen, ascended, pleading before the Throne of God for you. Here He is—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”  
Here He is, waiting to be comforted with your company, desiring communion with you, panting that His sister, His spouse, would be no longer a stranger to Him. Here He is, waiting to be gracious, saying, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Come, Christian, come! Let this be your desire, “That I may know Him.” And you who do not know Him and have not loved Him, I pray you will breathe this prayer with me, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” O Sinner, He is a gentle Christ! He is a loving Savior and they that seek Him early shall find Him! May you seek and find Him, for His name’s sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0 . Ages Software, 1.800.297.4308 Sermon #2315 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷ Php 3.12

PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING  
NO. 2315

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 2, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1889.

**“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected; but I press on, that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”***Php 3:12***.**

OBSERVE the Apostle’s condition when he wrote these words. I do not think that either you or I will be found to be in a better one. If any are, or think they are, I would suggest a question. I, for my part, would be satisfied to be just as Paul was.

He was in a position of conscious safety. He was a saved man. He knew that he was saved, for he rejoiced in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh. He knew that he was justified by faith in Christ Jesus and he counted all his own works, which formerly were his ground of trust, to be as dross and dung, that he might win Christ. He was a saved man and he knew it! I do not think that he often had doubts about that point, but yet he was in a state of conscious imperfection—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.” He had not yet reached his own ideal of what a Christian might be. He had not yet obtained from Christ all that he expected to obtain. He was not sitting down to rest and be thankful, but he was still hurrying on, reaching after something which was yet beyond him. He could not say, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years,” but he still felt his own spiritual poverty, and he cried, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.”

But, Beloved, let not that thought be any kind of solace to you, for I would remind you that though consciously imperfect, Paul was zealously making progress. He says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I know many who say that they are imperfect and they seem to be quite satisfied to be so. That was never the case with the Apostle—as long as any trace of a sinful nature or a sinful tendency remained in him, it made him cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It was not because he was dead in sin that he cried in that way. It would be a new thing in this world for a sinner dead in sin to cry so, but because he was already largely delivered from sin and the reigning power of it had been broken! Therefore he felt the burden of any sort of contact with sin. A man who is in the sea, taking a plunge deep down under the water, does not feel the weight of the water. But bring him out on the shore, put a great tub of water on his head—and see what a weight that is to him! So, while a man is in sin as his element, it is no burden to him, but when he is out of it, and not under its power, then he feels the weight of it, he grows weary under it and would gladly be rid of every particle of it.

The Apostle, I say, was conscious of imperfection, but he was also conscious that he was making progress, that he was running towards a mark, that he was leaving much behind him, and was pressing toward that which was before him. He was also in a state of anxious aspiration. He desired that he might be found in Christ, that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that he might, in a word, grasp that for which Christ had grasped him. I am going to talk about that double grasp, tonight—“That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,”

Notice that there are two forces here mentioned which are at work in every gracious man. There is Christ’s power by which He apprehends us and then there is the new power, the new life of God-given faith, by which we, in our turn, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended us. Christ has apprehended us for a purpose—we wish to realize that purpose even to the fullest. That is the intent of the Apostle’s words. Let us consider them in detail.

I. First, let us think of PAUL’S APPREHENSION BY CHRIST JESUS. We do not often use the word, “apprehended,” now, in the sense in which it is here used. The only instance that I remember is when we speak of a policeman apprehending a person, that is, laying hold upon him, seizing him. At his conversion, Paul had been apprehended by his Lord. Take the word, “apprehend,” in the sense of arresting him, and it stands true of Saul of Tarsus. I need not repeat the story—you all know how that desperate rebel was going down to Damascus to persecute the saints of God. Nothing was further from his mind than the thought of becoming a Christian, but while he was riding the high horse and Damascus lay below him, just like a sheep within reach of a wolf, the Lord Jesus Christ stepped in and laid His hand on his shoulder—  
*“Thus the eternal counsel ran,  
‘Almighty Grace, arrest that man!’”*  
And almighty Grace arrested him! He fell to the earth at the first blow. He was blinded with the second. No, not so much by a blow as by the greatness of the Light of God that shone round about him! And there he lay prostrate, broken in heart and blind in eyes—he had to be led into the city—and one of those poor men whom he had determined to haul to prison had to come and pray for him, that his eyes might be opened, that he might be baptized, and that he might thus make his confession of faith in Christ! He well says that he was “apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The King sent no sheriff’s officer to arrest him, but He came, Himself, and took him into Divine custody, laid him by the heels for three days in the dark— and then let him out into glorious liberty, an altogether changed man—to go forth to preach that faith which before he had sought to destroy!  
You may not all be able to remember any special day when you were apprehended by Christ, but some of us do. We remember when we, who had been formerly carried captive by the devil at his will, found ourselves arrested by One stronger than Satan. We managed, by Divine Grace, to escape from the clutches of the devil, but we could not escape from that dear pierced hand when once it was laid upon us! We surrendered ourselves prisoners. There was no resisting, any longer, when His mighty Grace came in to arrest us. I say that some of us remember that day. Other days, notable for great events, have been forgotten, but the day when we were apprehended of Christ Jesus is stamped upon our memory, and always must be, even throughout eternity!  
Since then, dear Friends, we have always felt that grip, just as Paul always felt himself in Christ’s grasp. We have never got away from that one arrest. It was not the work of a few minutes to be remembered and to be then ended, and all over. No, at this moment we feel the same Divine hand upon us! We are prisoners, this day, unto Christ, who alone has set us free by capturing us! There was a legend among the heathen of old times, that if persons saw certain spirits in the woods, they became, from that moment, wonderfully changed—they became possessed by the spirit which they saw! They had, as we say in our language, a twist. I remember when—  
*“I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His Cross I stood”*  
and I have had a twist ever since! I never got over it and never expect to. I hope that twist will get a more and more powerful hold over me. It turned everything upside down. It changed the right into the left. It made the bitter sweet and the sweet bitter—the light darkness, and the darkness light. It was a wonderful twist and, as I say again, that twist still continues! When it has once been experienced, there is no escaping from it. We can say not only, “I was apprehended,” but as the text has it, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” He still binds us with the fetters of His love. We still sit at His dear feet, enthralled by His beauties. We are still under the Omnipotent fascination of His altogether lovely face. We could not depart from Him if we would and we could not if we could! If we went away from Christ, to whom would we go? He has the Words of eternal life! His love holds and binds us faster than fetters of brass. We must forever be apprehended by Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Now, Beloved, this arrest of Paul by Christ was the force and motive of his whole later life. Because Paul had been apprehended by Christ, he began to live differently from what he had ever lived before. He had an apprehension that he had lived amiss. He had an apprehension that his evil life would end in eternal destruction. He fled away from all his apprehensions of the wrath to come, to the Christ who had apprehended him in quite another sense! He had thus been apprehended, pressed into the service of Christ and made, by that pressure, to become a volunteer, for here there is a paradox—all Christ’s soldiers are pressed men and volunteers, too! There are two senses, the one in which Grace constrains them, and the other in which their will, being made truly free, runs delightfully after Christ! But having once been apprehended, the Apostle never shook off Christ’s grasp—he began to live as an apprehended man. He said to himself, “I cannot follow the world, for Christ has apprehended me. I cannot go after false doctrine, for Christ has apprehended me and crucified me with Himself. I cannot cease to preach the Gospel. I cannot become a selfseeker. I cannot do anything but live for Him who died for me, for the Master has apprehended me. He has put me under parole to keep close to Him forever and I must not, cannot, dare not, would not leave Him! I am His apprehended one henceforth and even forever.”  
I want your hearts to talk over this first part of the sermon. Never mind my faltering tongue—let your own hearts speak. If Christ has never apprehended you, well then, you have nothing to do with this matter, and you may leave it alone. But if He has arrested you, acknowledge the soft impeachment, tonight. Say in your heart, “Yes, He has, indeed, laid hold on me, and my heart’s desire is that He would bring every thought into captivity to Him. From henceforth I would be led in triumph by Him, His captive all the days of my life, to show the power of His illustrious love, the victories of His Grace!” Oh, that we might, each one, say with Paul, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus”!  
Ah, dear Souls, you who have never been apprehended of Him, I hope that you will be, tonight! I pray God that you may run away from your old master, the devil, and not give him even five minutes’ notice, but just start off directly! And while you are a runaway slave, may my Divine Master come and lay His hand upon you and say, “You are Mine. You never did really belong to your old master and even though you promised and swore that you would be his, thus says the Lord, ‘Your Covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand.’ I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are Mine, and now I only take what I bought on the tree. I take by power, by might, by main force, by Grace, what I purchased with the blood of My hands and feet and heart. I will have you, for you are Mine.” Lord, will You thus arrest some sinner, tonight, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace?  
II. Now let us notice PAUL’S DESIRE TO APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH THE LORD HAD APPREHENDED HIM.  
Well, why did Christ apprehend Paul? First, it was to convert him completely—to make a new man of him, to turn him from all his old ways and pursuits—and put him on quite a different road. Now, Brothers and Sisters, that is why the Lord apprehended us—to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus! Let us pray God to carry out that design to the fullest, to make us altogether new creatures. Do not let us be satisfied while there are any remains of the old nature—let us cry to the Lord to drive the Canaanites out—and though they have chariots of iron, let us, by Divine Grace, drive them all out! Pray, “Lord Jesus, You have come to turn me from every sin—turn me and I shall be turned! You have provided medicine for every disease—Lord, heal me and I shall be healed!”  
Do not be satisfied, any of you, with half a conversion! I am afraid that there are a great many who have not much more than half a conversion. I know a man—I hope he is converted, but I wish that the Lord would convert his temper. He prays very nicely, but you should see him when he is red in the face with anger at his wife! I know a man—I hope he is a Christian, it is not for me to judge—but I wish that the Lord would convert his pocket. It needs a button taken off, for it is very difficult to get it open! It is very easy to put something in, but hard to get anything out for any good purpose. I know a great many professing Christians who do not seem to have had what we might call a thorough conversion. We need the power which has arrested us to do its work completely—till there is not any part of us but what has been renewed by Grace and sanctified to the service and Glory of God. Brethren, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended you, namely, a thorough conversion, a turning of yourself from every evil way!  
But the Lord apprehended each one of His people, in the next place, to make them like to Christ. This is the great design of electing love—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” That is the great objective of the very first act of Divine Love— and whatever the Holy Spirit does in us, He does it with this aim to make us like unto the Firstborn among many brethren. This will be our satisfaction in eternity—“I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” Come, then, Beloved, if Christ has arrested us to make us like Himself, let us not rest till we have become more like He! Perhaps the Lord has made you like Christ in some respects, but not in all. Or if you are like Christ in all respects, yet the likeness is dim, shadowy, rather in outline than in filling-up. Though we may be likenesses of Christ, there is not one of us who does not need many touches before we shall be good likenesses! Some, I fear, are caricatures of Christ. May the Lord have pity upon us if that is the case, and go on with His work, and take out all the blotches and blemishes, and paint the true portrait till. at last. everybody who sees us will say, “There is Christ in that man—he is a likeness of Christ”!  
We may not all be paintings on ivory. We may not all be taken on a sheet of silver, but the Lord’s portrait, even though it is on a piece of clay, has still great beauties in it. And as He intends to make us like Christ, O Beloved, let us aspire to this! Come, get it into your voice and get it into your heart! You are to be like Christ and as you are to be so, and this is the very reason why Christ has arrested you, pine after it, thirst after it, labor after it! Trust God to work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and while He is doing that, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in you!  
If you turn to Paul’s description of his own conversion, which he gave to Agrippa, you will find that the Lord said to him that He had appeared to him to make him a witness of that which he had seen, and of that which He would afterwards reveal to him. So, in the third place, we have been apprehended of Christ that we may be witnesses for Him, first seeing a great deal and then telling what we have seen, which is the other sense of the word, “witness.” A witness sees or hears and then he tells in court what he has seen or heard and so he becomes a witness to others as once he was a witness to himself. Now, the Lord has apprehended every Christian, here, to see their Savior, to see His Grace, to see His love, to see His power, to see all the wonders which the Holy Spirit works among men— and then to go and talk of these things to others, that they, also, hearing from the lips of a witness, may be led to believe by the power of the Holy Spirit!  
Beloved, if the Lord Jesus Christ has apprehended you that you may be a witness, be on the lookout! Keep your eyes open! See all that you can see. Every Prophet of olden times was called a Seer. You cannot prophesy to others until you have been a seer yourself! Pray that you may see all that is in the Word. Cry, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” Pray that you may see the movements of God in Providence, and may see the hand of God in your own heart and your own experience. Pray God, first, to make you a witness, an observer—and then tell out to others what you have tasted and

handled and felt of the Word of life—and be a faithful witness for your Lord and Master all your days. Do not some professing Christians, who are here, tonight, feel a little uncomfortable? You have not yet seen all that you should see and have you not kept very much to yourselves what you have seen? I would that you could apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus, seeing what He means you to see and then, telling out what He means you to tell. May the Lord instruct us more and more that we may fulfill all His good pleasure!  
But, next, we were converted in order to be the instruments of the conversion of others. Paul, when he was speaking to Agrippa, expressly mentioned how the Lord said, “Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” So, you see, there was a certain number of souls for whom Paul was apprehended that he might be the instrument of their salvation! Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”  
Now, that power Christ distributes among His people. There is a certain number of persons who will receive eternal life through my ministry. There is a certain number who will receive eternal life through another man’s ministry. I wonder how many have, in this way, been appointed to you, that you might be the means of their salvation? You were not saved that you might only go to Heaven—you were saved that you might take others there with you! In the olden days, when a man needed pigeons, he used to take a dove of his own and smear its wings all over with perfume, and then, when it was very sweet to smell, he threw it up into the air and it went into other dovecots, and all the pigeons went after it. And when it came back, it brought them home to its master. That was a roguish trick, but it is a blessed method of bringing poor flying doves to Christ! When your wings are sweet with Christ’s love. When every time that you move, you perfume the air with holiness and mercy and Grace, others will flock around you and fly with you like doves to their windows!  
I like to think of the many that God has appointed me to bring to Him. I cannot tell you how many I have met during the past week—they have made my heart dance for joy. Last Tuesday, when we had a large company of deacons of our Metropolitan Churches here, one would steal up to me, as I sat there shaking hands, and say, “On such a day, I heard you preach from such a text. I was a careless young man, but you brought me to the Savior.” Another would come and say, “God bless you, Sir! I remember when you were the means of leading me to the Savior.” One took my hand with a ferocious grip and could not say a word till he had shed many a tear. These things make us very happy and my heart’s desire is that I may get all that Christ means me to get, that I may apprehend all that, or them, for which He apprehended me!  
I want every Christian Brother and Sister, here, to feel the same. There is somebody in the world whom you have to bring to Christ. I do not know where he is, or who he is, but you had better look out for him. Come, seek now. Say, “I would not lose a single pearl, though it lies deep under the waves of the sea, if my great Lord intends me to dive for it, and bring it up into the Light.” Get to your searching after the hidden treasures and be intent, day and night, in the power of the Spirit, that you may apprehend that measure of usefulness for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus! It will be a high honor to appear, at last, as a winner of souls! Kings might doff their diadems and forget that they ever wore them, in comparison with that crown which God will give to those who turn many to righteousness, for they shall shine “as the stars forever and ever!” Aspire to this, my dear Friends, and lose none of those for which you have been apprehended of Christ Jesus your Lord.  
In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Well, now, some of you were apprehended on purpose that you might suffer for Christ’s sake. Did I see you wince at that word? Well, but if usefulness by labor is an honor, usefulness by suffering is a still greater honor! In Heaven, the brightest crown that any saint wears is that which is set with the rubies of martyrdom. When I have read the stories of those holy men and women who died in Roman amphitheatres, or were burned to death over at Smithfield, yonder, I must confess that I have envied them. To preach Christ seems so little compared with having Grace enough to suffer for His name’s sake! As one reads of their intense suffering, one naturally shrinks from it and says, “I thank God that I am not called to endure that trial.” But yet, if we were called to it, we would have Grace given to us to bear it! What an honor it was for them, for the sake of the Prince of martyrs, the Leader of the sacramental hosts of God’s elect, to be able and willing to give themselves up to death!  
Well, you may be called to suffer for Christ’s sake, but, at any rate, you are called to this—to lay your all upon His altar, to devote yourself, your substance, all that you are and all that you have, to His honor and Glory! You are apprehended of Christ Jesus for this purpose—try to apprehend it. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us resolve to live wholly unto Christ! Let us bid Him take our hands, feet, heart, eyes, brain and every faculty of our being! May God get as much glory as He can, out of us, or reflect as much of His Glory as is possible through even our weakness and infirmities! But this is why we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, that we may be wholly and only the Lord’s, “For the love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Here is the prize of your high calling—are you ready to run for it? God help you to do so, to apprehend, in personal self-sacrifice, all that for which Christ has apprehended you!  
But that is not all. Paul said that he regarded himself as having been arrested by Christ that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Oh, when that trumpet peals out and the righteous arise, shall I arise? Or shall I lie rotting in the tomb another thousand years? And when He calls His saints together, when—  
*“East and west, and south and north,  
Speeds each glorious angel forth,  
Gathering in with glittering wings  
Zion’s saints to Zion’s King,”*  
shall we be there? Shall we behold the splendor of Christ’s appearing? Shall we sit upon the Throne of God with Him, judging mankind? Shall we be forever with the Lord? It is for this that we are apprehended. Are you getting ready for this? Are you preparing, by His Grace, for that eternal future? I believe that all the saints will get to Heaven, but every saint ought to aspire not only to get there, but to carry, there, with him, that which will make his Heaven more glorious to God than it otherwise would be. Part of the joy of Heaven will be to remember what the Lord did by us. We are not going there to go to bed forever—we are going there to do some glorious work for Christ. How does He describe it? He says that if His servants have been faithful and diligent, He will say to one, “Have authority over ten cities,” and another shall be ruler over five cities. As we have proved our ability, such will be the dominion that Christ shall give us throughout the ages to come! And a little failing, today, as it were the loss of a penny, may mean the loss of thousands of pennies in the world to come. You shall be as full as the greatest vessel, but you shall have smaller capacity. Look to that matter, now.  
I believe that every action in this mortal life thrills through eternity. Time and eternity are like one tremulous mass of jelly—if you touch one particle of it here, it trembles right through, and right throughout the ages. Not a word is spoken but the echo of it shall be heard when time shall be no more. Not a deed is done that dies, especially the deeds of quickened men and women! They know not what they do—they will be astonished to find, at the Last Great Day—what they have done, for the Lord will evidently surprise His people when He says, “I was hungry, and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink.” They will say, “Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink?” And if you apprehend to the fullest the great purpose of Christ in apprehending you, that it is not of debt, but of Grace—not of works, but of faith, yet, in the ages to come, you shall be surprised to find how the little that you did shall bring you great reward! God gives His people good works and then rewards them for them! He works in us to will and to do, and then we will and do and He gives us a reward for willing and doing!  
I wish, dear Friends, that in Heaven we might feel, “Well, I did as God helped me. I apprehended that for which my Master apprehended me.” You have no idea what you are going to do in Glory. I expect, one day, to preach to an assembled universe concerning my Lord and Master, to tell to principalities and powers what Christ has done—not to sit with a lot of you good people, some listening to me, and some, perhaps, not—but to have angels, and principalities, and powers to be my congregation! And I want to learn to preach well, here, that they may be attentive to me. Each one of you who has served your Lord shall be a monument of His love and His mercy—and the angels shall stop and read what is inscribed on you! Oh, that there might be some good letters written on you, that when Gabriel stops to read, he may clap his hands and then fly with swifter flight, as he says, “Bless the Lord for what He did for that poor man, for what He worked in that poor woman! His Grace is conspicuous there.” As you are to be seen throughout all eternity, may you be fit to be seen! May the Lord, of His Grace, work in you that which shall be to the praise of His Glory!  
III. I have done when I just take a minute or two to show THE LESSONS WHICH PAUL IS TEACHING US BY THIS TEXT.  
The first is this, make sure of your apprehension by Christ Jesus, so that you can talk like Paul about it, “That for which I am apprehended.” Pray the Lord that you may feel His hand on your shoulder, that you may feel His Grace in your heart, His blessed fetters on your feet, His Divine manacles upon your wrists. Pray that you may have no doubt about it, but may know beyond all doubt that the Lord has arrested you.  
This being known, do not let it make you idle. Do not say, “Christ has arrested me; I am saved; nothing more is needed.” No. Why has He arrested you? He has a purpose in it. That arrest was but the beginning of a great lifework. Let it not make you idle, but let it be your encouragement. If Christ has arrested you to be holy, He will make you holy. If Christ has arrested you for usefulness, be confident in seeking it. If Christ has arrested you to make you an eternal monument of His Grace, believe that you will be, and press forward to the mark for the prize of your high calling!  
Finally, let this lead you to hope for the salvation of others. Go forward hopefully in your service for others. Teach that Sunday school class with a firm belief that you were apprehended on purpose that John and Tom might be converted! Go and teach the girls and say, “I was apprehended to bring Mary, and Jane, and Louisa to Christ—and do not be at all doubtful about it.” This is the purpose of God—expect it to be worked out! Go to your street corner, my beloved Brother, and preach away—even when the mob disturbs you! Go from door to door with your tracts, even though they may be cast in your face. Go, city missionaries and Bible-women, to your holy and righteous toil. Go, each one of you, to the work for which God has apprehended you, for as the Lord has apprehended you, it is for a purpose! And rest not until that purpose is fully established.  
May the Lord arrest some sinners, tonight! Pray, as you go down the aisles, “Lord, arrest them! Bring them to Your dear feet and save them this night, for Jesus’ sake!” Amen.

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

The Holy Spirit indited this Epistle by the pen of His servant, Paul. May He also write it on our hearts!  
Verse 1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. When you get to, “finally.” When you are very near the end of your journey, still, “rejoice in the Lord.” “Finally,” says Paul, as if this were the end of his Epistle, the conclusion of all his teaching—“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” But never do it finally! Never come to an end of it! Rejoice in the Lord and yet, again, rejoice, and yet, again, rejoice—and as long as you live, rejoice in the Lord.  
1. To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Some hearers are like the Athenian academicians—they want continually to hear something new. The Apostle says, “To have the same things written to you, is safe.” So is it for you, dear Friends, to have the same Gospel, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit made known to you, is safe. New doctrine is dangerous doctrine!  
2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers. They are like dogs. If they fawn upon you, they will dirty you, if they do not bite you.  
2, 3. Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. There were some who had confidence in circumcision, who greatly troubled Paul. The Apostle says that they were, “the concision,” the cutters off, of whom he would have the Philippians beware.  
4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has of which he might trust in the flesh, I more. If any man might have had confidence in the flesh, truly Paul might.  
5, 6. Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. So that I do not know what more he could have had. If a Jew had tried to select a man who had something to glory in, he could not have picked any man to stand in the front of Paul! He was truly a Jew. He had received the initiatory rite and on the right day. He was born of Law of God to the extreme. He tithed his mint and his cummin. Nobody could have anything to glory in which Paul had not.  
7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. So that, when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it as a gain—now we must set it down as a loss—it is of no value, whatever! It is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.  
8. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Those are sweet words, “my Lord.” Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, “My Lord and my God”? Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, “My Lord.”  
8, 9. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him. Oh, what a precious place to be found in, “in Him,” trusting in Him, hidden away in Him, a member of His body, as it were, losing myself in Him!  
9. Not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law. He does not say, not trusting it, but not even having it, not counting it, not thinking it worthwhile to put down among his possessions that which he once prized so much.  
9, 10. But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him. Paul means, “That I may know Him more than I now do,” for he knew Him and delighted in Him, but he felt as if he had not really begun to know Christ. He was like a child at school who has learned to read and to write, and knows so much that he begins to want to know more.  
10, 11. And the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. He knew that all the dead would rise again, but he aspired to the first resurrection—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”  
12, 13. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. He did count himself as saved—he knew that he was Christ’s— but he did not count himself as having realized all that Christ meant to do for him and by him. He did not reckon that he had reached as far as he could reach, or learned all that he could learn, or done all that he could do.  
13, 14. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You have seen a man running very fast. How he leans forward, as though he would send his heart before him and go quicker than his legs can carry him! So did the Apostle, “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”  
15, 16. Let us, therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Let us keep all the good that we have received. Let us not give up the Truth of God that we have learned. Let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far—and let us keep together—let perfect unanimity prove that the work of Grace is going on in one as well as in another.

17. Brethren, be followers together of me. In these days, certain people find fault with Paul and speak of him as if he were not Inspired, and not to be followed as Christ was, But here he expressly says what no man like Paul would ever say unless moved of the Holy Spirit, for he was modest and, by no means, anxious to push himself forward—“Brethren, be followers together of me.”

17. And mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. Mark them, but do not follow them. See how they walk, but do not imitate them—“Have us for an example.”

18. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. I lay a stress upon the article—“They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” Professors of religion who get into the Church and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has! These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes! These are they who break his heart! They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

19. Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things). “Who mind earthly things”— even when they profess to be minding spiritual things—pretending to be followers of Christ up to Heaven and yet really making a gain of the things of God here below.

20. For our conversation is in Heaven. Can you say that, dear Friend? Is your citizenship in Heaven? Is your conversation there? Do you often commune with your Lord upon the Throne? Judge yourselves whether it is so or not. It is a very poor thing to have a name to be in Heaven and yet never to have any converse with Heaven! I wish that we could all say that we talk more to God than we do to men, and have more business upward than we have here below.

20. From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming! He is coming! Are we looking for Him? This is the true position of the Christian—looking for the appearing of his Lord!

21. Who shall change our vile body. “The body of our humiliation.” We have only part of the redemption while we are here. The soul is regenerated, newly-born, but the body is not. “The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The redemption of the purchased possession will be perfect at the resurrection. The resurrection will be, to the body, what regeneration is to the soul! We sometimes wonder why we are sick when Christ could make us well in a moment—but the reason is that, as yet, He has not fully brought His Divine Power to bear upon the body.

21. That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. May He show some part of that blessed power in us tonight! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2315 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Php 3.13

A THREEFOLD SLOGAN  
NO. 3536

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1916.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“One thing is necessary.” “One thing I know.” “One thing I do.” Luke 10:44. ***Joh 9:25***. ***Php 3:13***.  
[The original title of this sermon was A THREEFOLD MOTTO.]

I HAVE “one thing” in view—“one thing” on which I want to rivet your attention. Forbear with me if I detain you a few minutes before announcing a text. It has been said that a man of one book is terrible in the force of his convictions. He has studied it so well, digested it so thoroughly and understands it so profoundly, that it is perilous to encounter him in controversy. No man becomes eminent in any pursuit unless he gives himself up to it with all the powers and passions of his nature—body and soul. Michelangelo had never been so great a painter if his love of art had not become so enthusiastic that he frequently did not take off his garments to sleep by the week together—nor had Handel ever been such a great musician if his ardor for celestial sounds had not led him to use the keys of his harpsichord till, by constant fingering, they became the shape of spoons. A man must have one pursuit and consecrate all his powers to one purpose if he would excel or rise to eminence among his fellows.

When streams of water divide themselves into innumerable streams, they usually create a swamp which proves dangerous to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Could all those streams be dammed up into one channel, and made to flow in one direction, they might resolve themselves into a navigable river, bearing commerce to the ocean and enriching the people who dwelt upon its banks. To obtain one thing, one comprehensive blessing from Heaven, has been the objective of many a saintly prayer, like that of David, “Unite my heart to fear Your name.” The advice of Paul was, “Set not your affection upon things on earth,” not, “your affections,” as it is often misquoted. The Apostle would have all the affections tied up into one affection—and that one concentrated affection not set upon earthly things—but upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God! The concurrence of all our powers and capacities with one single impulse, to obtain one objective and to produce one result, is one great aim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!  
The “one thing” concerning which I am now about to talk very seriously to you will require three texts to elucidate it. There are three pithy passages of Holy Scripture which I shall endeavor to press home on your heart and conscience.

I. ONE THING NECESSARY.  
Our first text is to be found in the Gospel according to Luke 10:44, “One thing is necessary.” This one thing, according to this passage, is faith in Christ Jesus, the sitting down at the Master’s feet, the drinking in of His Word. If I may expand for a minute the “one thing,” without seeming to make 20 things of that which is but one, I will refer it to the possession of a new life. This life is given to us when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are created anew in Christ Jesus. And it develops itself in a simple confidence in Jesus, in a hearty obedience to Jesus, in a desire to be like Jesus and in a constant yearning to be near to Jesus. “One thing is necessary”—that one thing is salvation—worked in us by the Holy Spirit, through faith which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. The new heart, the right spirit, a filial fear of God, love to Jesus—this is the “one thing necessary.” How I trust you all know how to distinguish things essential from things convenient, and that you are more concerned about necessary things than about things merely attractive, or, at most, but an accessory to your welfare! The little child may admire the field which is covered with red and blue flowers. The farmer cares nothing for these flowers—he delights in the wheat that is ripening for the sickle. So our childish minds are often fascinated with the flaunting flowers of fortune and fashion—craving after wealth, fame and worldly distinction—but our better reason, if it is allowed to speak, will prefer the necessary things, the things which we must have, or else must perish. We may do without earthly goods, for thousands have been happy in life and triumphant in death without any of the luxury which riches can purchase. The heart’s love of his fellow creatures has been fairly won by many a humble man who never courted popular applause. The patience of the poor has often counted for fine gold, while the pride of the affluent has passed for nothing but foul dross. Even lack of health, Heaven’s priceless blessing to mortals here below, has not hindered some precious sufferers from serving their generation, glorifying God in a martyrdom of pain and bequeathing treasures of piety to a grateful posterity. Ten thousand things are convenient. Thousands of things are desirable. Hundreds of things are to be sought for, but there is one thing, only one thing, the one thing we have described to you, of which our Savior speaks as the “one thing necessary.”  
And, oh, how necessary it is! Necessary for your children—they are growing up about you and much joy they give you—for you can see in them many budding excellences. To your partial eyes they give promise of goodness, if not of greatness! They will be the comfort of your declining years. You have carefully watched their education. Not a whit of their moral habits have you failed to overlook. To give them a fair start in the world has been your fond desire till their portion is the fruit of your providence. From perils you would protect them. Lest they should have to rough it, perhaps, as much as their father before them, you would pilot them through the straits. Good! But, dear parents, do remember that “one thing is necessary” for your children, that they may commence life, continue in life and close life honorably. It is well that they should be educated. It is well that morality should be instilled into them, but this is not enough! Alas, we have seen many leave the purest parental influences to plunge into the foulest sins! Their education has become but a tool for iniquity, and the money with which they might have helped themselves to competence has been squandered away in vice. “One thing is necessary” for that bright-eyed boy! Oh, if you can take him to the Savior, and if the blessing of the Good Shepherd shall alight upon him and renew him while yet a child, the best will have been done for him—yes, his one chief need supplied! And if that dear girl, before she comes to womanhood, shall have been led to that blessed Savior who rejects none that come to Him, she will have received all she shall need for time and for eternity! Quicken your prayers, then, dear parents. Think of your children, to seek their welfare more intelligently. Be more importunate in intercession on their behalf! Truly, this is the one thing necessary for them.  
One thing, too, is necessary for that young man just leaving home to go out as an apprentice and learn his trade. That is a trying time for an untried hand. The heart may well flutter as one, young and inexperienced, reflects that he is now about to sail, not on a coasting voyage, but to put fairly out to sea. Before long it will be seen whether those fair professions had the Truths of God as a foundation. He will get to London—many of you have passed through this ordeal! The Metropolis, what a maze it seemed to you at first, and with what amazement you surveyed it! What with propensities within your breast, and profuse attractions outside—temptation held you spell-bound! What could not be done in the village—what you dared not think of in the little market town, seems easy to be done unobserved in the great city! Hundreds of fingers point you to the haunts of pleasure, the home of vice, the path to Hell! Ah, mother and father, you present the Bible as your parting gift. You write the youth’s name on the flyleaf. You offer your prayers and you shed your tears for him. Steals there not over you the conviction that the one thing he needs you cannot pack in his trunk, nor can you send it up to him by a post office order? The one thing necessary is that Christ should be formed in his heart the hope of glory! With that he would begin life well. A sword of the true Jerusalem metal, that will not break in the heat of the conflict, will be serviceable all his journey through. Do I address some young man who has not forgotten his mother’s kind remarks when he left home? Let me just echo them, and say to him, One thing you lack! Oh, seek it, seek it now! Before going out of this house, seek till, through Grace, you obtain this one thing necessary which shall bear you safely to the skies!  
But “one thing is necessary,” not merely for those youngsters at home, or for those about to go abroad in the world. One thing is necessary for the business man. “Ah,” he says, “I need a great many things.” But what, I ask, is the one thing? You speak of “the necessary.” You call ready cash “the indispensable.” “Give me this,” says the man of the world, “and I don’t care about anything else! Recommend your religion to whom you please, but let me have solid gold and silver, and I will be well content.” Ah, Sirs, you delude yourselves with phantoms! You fondly dream that wealth in your hands would count for more than it has ever done for your fellows. You must have seen some men make large fortunes whom you knew to be very miserable. They have retired from business to get a little rest, and yet they could find no rest in their retirement! You must have known others who, the more they got, the more they have wanted, for they have swallowed a horseleech, and it has cried, “Give, give!” Of course, you never suspected that the money did the mischief, or that the precious metal poisoned the heart. But are you in quest of happiness? It lies not in investments, whether in government bonds or mortgages, or stocks or debentures, or gold or silver. These properties are profitable. They can be used to promote happiness. As accessories to our welfare, they may often prove to be blessings, but if accredited with intrinsic worth they will eat as does a canker! Money circulated is a medium of public benefit, while money hoarded is a means of private discomfort! A man is but a muckraker who is forever seeking to scrape everything to himself. A miser is bound to be miserable. Before high Heaven, he is an object to make the angels weep! One thing is necessary for you merchants, brokers and warehousemen to keep you from sinking under your anxieties and losses, or to preserve you from becoming sordid and selfish through your successes and lest your greed should increase with your gains! One thing is necessary that your life may be a true life, or else, when it comes to its end, all that can be said of you will amount to this, “He died worth so much.” Must that be your only memorial? When you depart from this world, the poor and needy will not miss you. Widow and orphans will not grieve for you! The Church militant will not mourn! The bright spirits above will not be waiting to greet you. The grand climax of your career—a will! A testament sworn under a very large sum! What shall it profit any man what fortune he may have amassed, if he loses his soul?  
Do you think that riches possessed in this world will procure any respect in the nether regions? I have heard that in the old Fleet Prison, the thief who was put into jail for stealing ten thousand pounds thought himself a gentleman in comparison with those common fellows who were put in for some paltry debt of 20 or 25 pounds! There are no such distinctions in Hell! You who can boast your talents of gold and talents of silver, if cast away, shall be as complete wrecks as those who never had copper or sliver, but lived and died in privation and poverty! You need one thing, and if you get this one thing, your wealth shall prove a blessing—otherwise it will be a curse! With this one thing your sufficiency for the day guaranteed to you by promise shall make you as one of Heaven’s favorites, fed by the hand of God, always needy, but never neglected. You aged folk—there are some such here—shall I have to remind any of you that one thing is necessary—yes, most necessary to you? Death has already put his bony palm upon your head and frozen your hair to the whiteness of that winter in which all your strength must fail, and all your beauty fade. Oh, if you have no Savior! You will soon have to quit these transitory scenes. The young may die, but the old must. To die without a Savior will be dreary and dreadful! Then, after death, the judgment! Brave old man, how will your courage stand that outlook, if you have none to plead your cause? Oh, aged woman, you will soon be in the scales—very soon must your character be weighed. If it is said of you, “Tekel, she is weighed in the balances and found wanting,” there will be no opportunity to get right or adjust your relations to God or to your fellow creatures. Your lamp will have gone out. There will be no chance of rekindling it! If lost, forever lost—forever in the dark—forever cast away! Little enough will it avail you, then, that you have nourished and brought up children. It will not suffice

you, then, that you paid your debts honestly. Vain the plea that you attended a place of worship and were always respected in the neighborhood! ONE THING is necessary! Lacking that, you will turn out to have been a fool! Notwithstanding many opportunities and repeated invitations, you have rejected the one thing—the one only thing—what an irreparable mistake! Oh, how you will weep as one disappointed! How you will gnash your teeth as do those who upbraid themselves! You will mourn forever, and your self-reproach shall know no end!  
I wish I could move you, as I desire, to feel as I feel, myself—that this one thing is necessary to every unconverted person here present. Some of you have already got this one choice thing that is so necessary. Hold it fast! Never let it go! Grace gave it to you—Divine Grace will keep it for you—Grace will hold you true to it. Never be ashamed of it. Prize it beyond all cost! But as for you who have it not—I think I hear your funeral knell pealing in my ears, and as you speed away, your spirits made to fly for very fear, right into the arms of Justice, I think I hear your bitter cry, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved!” I would gladly pluck you by the skirts, if I could, and say to you, “Why not seek the one thing necessary without more ado? Get it now! It will not in any way hurt you. It will make you happy, here, and blessed hereafter.” It is as necessary for this life as for the next, as necessary for the exchange as for the sick chamber, as necessary for the street and for the shop as for the dying bed and for the Day of Judgment. One thing— one thing is necessary! And now allow me to stop before taking you a stage further. Allow me, as it were, to change horses. I must take another text—  
II. ONE THING KNOWN.  
It is in the Gospel according to John, the 9th Chapter, and the 25th verse, and these are the words, “One thing I know.”  
The man who was born blind, whose eyes were opened at the pool of Siloam, said, “One thing I know.” This simple statement I want to turn into a pointed question. Among the many things, dear Friends, that you are acquainted with, do you know the one thing that this poor man knew, “Whereas I was blind, now I see”? Here is a wealth of selfknowledge in this single avowal. Little enough, I daresay, he knew about other people, but he knew a great deal about himself! He was well aware that he once was blind—and he was quite positive that he now could see. Oh, can you say it with sincerity, “I know that I was once blind—I could see no beauty in Christ, though I thought I saw great beauties in the world. Then I could not love God. I did not hate sin. I had no repentance, nor had I any faith. I was blind, but now—oh, blessed change—now I see my sin and weep over it! Now I see a Savior, and I trust Him! Now I see His beauties and I admire Him! Now I see His service and I delight to spend my strength in it! One thing I know.” What a marvelous experience of a marvelous change this implies! Nor can its importance be overrated. There is no going to Heaven unless you undergo a change which shall make you entirely new and make all things entirely new to you. A young convert once said, “I do not know what is happening—either the world is changed, or else I am, for nothing seems to me to be the same as once it was.” Ah, this old Bible, what a dry Book it used to be, but, oh, how it abounds in marrow and fatness now! Prayer—what a tedious duty, once, but what a delightful exercise now! The going up to God’s House on the Sabbath—used it not to be a weariness of the flesh? How much better to be in the fields! Yet now, how delightful we feel, to assemble with the Lord’s saints! With what pleasure we hail the festal morn! All things are altered. Behold, all things are become new! What we once hated, we love, and what we loved, we hate! Is it so, dear Hearer—is it so with you?  
Do not, I pray you, be content with mere reformation. Were you before a drunk, and are you now a teetotaler? Good—very good! Yet, good as it is, it will not save your soul! Dishonest and knavish you once were, but truthful and trustworthy you may now be—yet rely not upon it for salvation! In former days, unchaste—by stern resolve you may have given up the favorite lust—but even that will not save you! Those who never fell into your foul sloughs need the change, too. “You must be born-again.” You must have an entire renewal—a radical change! It is not cutting off the limbs of a tree, nor shifting it to another place, that will convert a bramble into a vine. The sap must be changed. The heart must be renewed. The inner man must be made completely new. Is it so with you? Why, I think if some of us were to meet our old selves walking down the street, we would hardly know ourselves! ‘Tis true, old self has taken good care to knock at our door pretty often since. Of all the knocks we hear, not even excepting that of the devil, there is none we dread so much! The knock of the old man when he says, “Let me in with my corruptions and lusts, and let me reign and have my own way.” No, old man, you were once ourselves, but go your way, for we have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man—we cannot know you, for one thing we know now that we knew not before—whereas we were blind, now we see!  
Need I linger any longer upon this point? Let it suffice if I leave it as a kind of awakening question upon the heart and conscience. There are not 20 things, but there is ONE THING you have to enquire about. Do you know for sure this one thing—that you are not now what you used to be? Do you know that Jesus has made the difference? That Jesus has opened the eyes that were once without sight? That you now see Jesus, and seeing, you love Him? Our third subject is—  
III. ONE THING DONE.  
The text is in the 3rd Chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, at the 13th verse. There the Apostle Paul says, “One thing I do.”  
Pray observe that I did not introduce “doing” first. That would not be appropriate. We do not begin with doing. The one thing necessary is not doing. Coming to Christ and trusting Him, must take the lead. Not until after you have got the one thing necessary, and know that you have got it, and are conscious that, whereas you were blind, now you see, can you be fit to take the next step—“one thing I do.” And what is that one thing? “Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It seems, then, that the Apostle gave his whole mind up to the glorifying of God by his spiritual life. He was never content with what he was. If he had a little faith, he sought for more. If he had a little hope, he aimed to obtain more. If he had some degree of virtue, he coveted more. Oh, Christians, never be satisfied with being merely saved! Up with you! Away! Off! Go onward to the high mountains, to the clearer light, to the brighter joy! If saved and brought, like the shipwrecked mariner, to shore—is that enough? Yes, for the moment it is enough to guarantee the purest satisfaction and the warmest congratulations. But the mariner must seek a livelihood as long as he lives. He must put forth his energies. Whatever avocations open up before him, he must vigorously seek such favors of fortune as may possibly be within his reach. Just so, let it be with you. Saved from the deep which threatened to swallow you up, rejoice that you are preserved from death, but resolve that the life vouchsafed to you shall be active, earnest, vigorous, fruitful in every good deed and work! Be diligent as your traders are! See how they wake their servants up in the morning, how they scold them if they are not diligent. This man must be hurried to one place, and that man to another. How sharp they speak! How quickly they move about! They will do their business and they spare no pains to increase it. Oh, that we were half as diligent in the service of God! Here we are driveling away our time. We do not put out all our talents, augment our faith, or enlarge our coast. Why are we so indolent in going to that great giver of every good and perfect gift for fresh supplies? Why do we not wait upon Him to be enriched? Would to God that we were as diligent in spiritual as we are in temporal things! Oh, that we were burning with a holy covetousness for the best gifts God can bestow and the choicest blessings saints can receive!  
Paul was anxious to do more good, to get more good, to be more good. He sought to win souls. He needed to make Christ’s name known. An ardent passion inflamed him! A high enthusiasm inspired him. Tentmaking, it is true, was his trade, but tent-making did not monopolize quite all his heart, and soul, and strength! Does your secular vocation absorb all your thoughts? Though Paul was proud of his industry, and could say conscientiously, “My own hands have ministered to my necessities,” yet preaching was the one thing he pursued as his life-work. He was a workman, just as many of you are—but where were his tools? They were ready to hand when he needed them. And did they, do you think, ever creep up into his heart? I believe never. “For us to live,” said he, “is Christ.” That was as true, I will guarantee you, when he was tentmaking, or picking up sticks on the island of Malta, as when he was talking heavenly wisdom to the worldly-wise, addressing the Athenians on Mars’ Hill or when he discoursed touching the resurrection of the dead to the Jews, or when he expounded the way of justification to the Gentiles! He was a man of one idea, and that one idea had entirely possessed him! In the old pictures they put a halo around the head of the saints. But, in fact, that halo encircles their hearts and penetrates every member of their bodies. The halo of disinterested consecration to Christ should not be about their brows, alone, to adorn their portraits, for it encompassed their entire being, their spirit, soul and body! It environed them, their whole being. “This one thing I do,” was the slogan of early saints. Let it be your slogan!  
Beloved, I address you as the saints of this generation. My earnest desire is that you should not come behind in Grace or in gifts. When the Believers of all ages muster, and are marshaled, may you be found among the faithful and true. If not among the first or second class of worthies in the army of the Son of David, yet good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Our God is a loving Father. He likes to praise His people. To this end do be clear about the one thing you need, the one thing you know, and the one thing you do! So will you stand well in that day. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **John 9.**

Verses l-3. And as Jesus passed by He saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. We are not to look upon such afflictions as any indication of special sin on the part either of the person or the parent. Of course, sin lies at the root of all our suffering as a great generic fact, but not so that we may attribute such an affliction to any one sin. The disciples, you see, dear Friends, are thinking about difficult problems. Their Master is thinking about how, practically, to meet the difficulty, and to this day there are a large number of Christians, professors and even ministers who occupy their time about questions which really are to no profit. If they could be answered, nobody would be the holier or the better! What does it matter to us what is the origin of evil? Far more important to turn the evil out than it is to find out how it came in! Very frequently, you know, after there is a terrible calamity or accident, we have an inquiry as to how it was done, and then we think the thing is all attended to. It would have been better, perhaps, to have an inquiry, before it was done, as to how it could be prevented. Our Lord has that wisdom— that practicalness. He begins to deal with the evil rather than to raise questions about it. Yes, and He sees in that evil a good coming out of it! He says that this man was blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him.

4-7. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve His purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, He has the glory of the grand result! If He takes the humble ministry of His servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday school, or anywhere else, He has all the more Glory and is the less likely to be robbed of it because He uses such unlikely means.

8, 9. The neighbors therefore, and they who before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he—We are sure of it.

9. Others said, He is like he—They were cautious bodies.  
9. But he said, I am he. He knew there was no mistaking his witness!  
10, 11. Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Very straightforward, very concise, very accurate—and when we make answer about our conversion, it is always well to take this for a copy—not too many flourishes, no coloring. He even leaves out about the spittle, but he gives it all as he can recollect it. So when you are talking about the Lord’s love to you and His way of converting you, it is quite sufficiently remarkable, without any touch of rouge. Let it be given just as it is.  
12. Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said I do not know. Enough for him to know what he did know—that his eyes were opened and how it was done! So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you! You are not expected to know everything. The very best and most honest thing is to say, “I do not know”  
13-14. They brought to the Pharisees him that before was blind. And it was the Sabbath Day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. So you may be sure that the Pharisees would be down upon Him for that, because, according to the Rabbis, the making of the clay to put upon this man’s eyes would be a kind of brick-making—and they would bring Him in guilty of brick-making directly! So did these men pervert things and make men guilty where no offense had been committed whatever.  
15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and do see. He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter. Besides, he has to deal with captious people—and then the least said, the sooner mended—and this shrewd man thought so.  
16, 17. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God, because He keeps not the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man, again, What say you of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet. He could see that.  
18-24. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we know not; he is of age; ask him. He shall speak for himself. These words spoke his parents because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner. How piously these Pharisees can talk—and generally in the name of God, all sorts of mischief begins. When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh, yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, “We know that this Man is a sinner,” and yet they spoke about giving God praise!  
25. He—Our shrewd friend of the opened eyes.  
25-27. Answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: therefore would you hear it again? Will you also be His disciples? The man is sharp, acute, cutting.  
28, 29. Then they reviled him and said, You are His disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He comes. The word, “fellow,” is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn.  
30-33. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from where He comes and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners: but if any man is a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing. He proves! He administrates! The thing is as clear as possible, and yet they refuse to see it.  
34. They answered and said unto him, You were altogether born in sins. It is the old rule, “Abuse the plaintiff.” Nothing could be said. Now abuse the man! He has answered you and his arguments are too difficult for you. Now throw hard words at him. “You were altogether born in sins.”  
34. And do you teach us? Wonderful, that, “us.” “Do you teach us?” Folly, ignorance and pride go together. This man, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, had told his tale and urged his argument—and now they abuse him and exalt themselves. “Do you teach us?” No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn!  
34. And they cast him out. That is the last argument. Out with him! Now we have defeated him.  
35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him. What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there He died outside the camp, and His people need not be ashamed to go after Him bearing His reproach. “When He had found him.”  
35-38. He said unto him, Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him, and it is He who is talking with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. He does not appear to have been a Unitarian, therefore, and if those persons had their eyes opened, they would do the same. “He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.”  
39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty”? So He always does.  
40. Jesus said unto them, If you were blind—Really could not see.  
41. You would have no sin. If you really did not know better, were totally and altogether without knowledge—then you would have no sin compared with what you now have.  
41. But now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains. You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open and, therefore, your sin is all the greater.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.** Sermon #1114 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

**ONWARD!**  
NO. 1114

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”***Php 3:13-14***.**

SO far as his acceptance with God is concerned, a Christian is complete in Christ as soon as he believes. Those who have trusted themselves in the hands of the Lord Jesus are saved—and they may enjoy holy confidence upon the matter, for they have a Divine warrant for so doing. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” To this salvation the Apostle had attained. But while the work of Christ for us is perfect and it were presumption to think of adding to it, the work of the Holy Spirit in us is not perfect—it is continually carried on from day to day—and will need to be continued throughout the whole of our lives.

We are being “conformed to the image of Christ,” and that process is in operation as we advance towards Glory. The condition in which a Believer should always be found is that of progress. His motto must be, “Onward and upward!” Nearly every figure by which Christians are described in the Bible implies this. We are plants of the Lord’s field, but we are sown that we may grow—“First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” We are born into the family of God, but there are babes, little children, young men, and fathers in Christ Jesus. Yes, and there are none who are perfect or fully developed men in Christ Jesus. It is always a growing process.

Is the Christian described as a pilgrim? He is no pilgrim who sits down as if rooted to the place. “They go from strength to strength.” The Christian is compared to a warrior, a wrestler, a competitor in the games— these figures are the very opposite of a condition in which nothing more is to be done. They imply energy, the gathering up of strength and the concentration of forces in order to the overthrowing of adversaries. The Christian is also likened to a runner in a race and that is the figure now before us in the text. It is clear that a man cannot be a runner who merely holds his ground, content with his position—he only runs aright who each moment nears the mark. Progress is the healthy condition of every Christian and he only realizes his best estate while he is growing in Divine Grace, “adding to his faith virtue,” “following on to know the Lord,” and daily receiving Grace for Grace out of the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus.

Now, to this progress the Apostle exhorts us—no, he does more than exhort—he allures us. He stands among us. He does not lecture us, “ex cathedra,” standing like a learned master far above his disciples, but he

puts himself on our level. And though not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, he says, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” He does not give us the details of his own imperfections and deficiencies, but in one word he confesses them in the gross. And then he declares that he burns with eager desire for perfection, so that it is the one passion of his soul to press onward towards the great goal of his hopes, the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. We cannot desire to have a better instructor than a man who sympathizes with us because he humbly considers himself to be of the same rank as ourselves. Teaching us to run, the Apostle, himself, runs. Wishing to fire our holy ambition, he bears testimony to that same ambition flaming within his own spirit.

Paul’s statements in the text call us to look at him under four aspects— first, as forming a just estimate of his present condition—“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” Secondly, as placing his past in its proper position—“forgetting the things which are behind.” Thirdly, as aspiring eagerly to a more glorious future—“reaching forth unto those things which are before.” And fourthly, as practically putting forth every exertion to obtain that which he desired—“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

I. First, admire our Apostle as PUTTING A JUST ESTIMATE UPON HIS PRESENT CONDITION. He was not one of those who consider the state of the Believer’s heart to be a trifling matter. He was not indifferent as to his spiritual condition. He says, “I count”—as if he had taken stock, had made a careful estimate and had come to a conclusion. He is not a wise man who says, “I am a Believer in Christ and therefore it little matters what are my inward feelings and experience.” He who so speaks should remember that keeping the heart with all diligence is a precept of Inspiration and that a careless walk usually comes to a very sorrowful ending.

The Apostle took account. And when he had done so he was dissatisfied—“I count not myself to have apprehended.” Nor was that dissatisfaction to be regretted. It was a sign of true Grace, a conclusion which is always arrived at when saints judge themselves rightly. Most weighty is that word of Chrysostom, “He who thinks he has obtained everything, has nothing.” Had Paul been satisfied with his attainments he would never have sought for more. Most men cry, “hold,” when they think they have done enough. The man who can honestly write, “I press forward,” you may be quite sure is one who feels that he has not yet apprehended all that might be gained. Self-satisfaction rings the death-knell of progress. There must be a deep-seated discontent with present attainments, or there will never be a striving after the things which are yet beyond.

Now, Beloved, mark that the man who in our text tells us that he had not apprehended was a man vastly superior to any of us. Among them that were born of women there has never lived a greater than Paul the Apostle. In sufferings for Christ, a martyr of the first class. In ministry for Christ an Apostle of foremost degree. Where shall I find such a man for Revelations? He had been caught up into the third Heaven and heard words which it was not lawful for him to utter! Where shall I find his match for character? A character splendidly balanced, as nearly apmating to that of his Divine Master as we well expect to see in mortal men. Yet, after having duly considered the matter, this notable saint said, “I count not myself to have apprehended.”

Shame, then, on any of us poor dwarfs if we are so vain as to count that we have apprehended! Shame upon the indecent self-conceit of any man who congratulates himself upon his own spiritual condition when Paul, himself, said, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” The injury which self-content will do a man would be hard to measure—it is the readiest way to stunt him and the surest method to keep him weak. I should be sorry, indeed, if I should be addressing one who imagines that he has apprehended, for his progress in Divine Grace is barred from this time forth! The moment a man says, “I have it,” he will no longer try to obtain it. The moment he cries, “It is enough,” he will not labor after more.

Yet, Brothers and Sisters, far too often, of late, have I come across the path of those who speak as if they have apprehended—Brethren whose own lips praise themselves, who sing upon their own fullness of Grace with an unction rather too exaggerated for my taste. I am not about to condemn them. I cannot say I am not about to censure them, for I intend to do so, from a deep sense of the necessity that they should be censured. These friends assure us that they have reached great heights of Grace and are now in splendid spiritual condition. I should be very glad to know that it is so if it were true. But I am grieved to hear them act as witnesses for themselves, for then I know that their witness is not true. If it were so, they would be the last men to publish it abroad.

There are Brethren abroad whose eminent graciousness is not very clear to others, but it is very evident to themselves—and equally as vivid is their apprehension of the great inferiority of most of their Brethren. They talk to us, not as men of like passions with ourselves and Brethren of the same stock, but as demigods, thundering out of the clouds—giants discoursing to the little men around them! If it is true that they are so superior, I rejoice! Yes, and will rejoice. But my suspicion is that their glorying is not good and that the spirit which they manifest will prove a snare to them. I meet, I say, sometimes with Brothers and Sisters who feel content with their spiritual condition. They do not ascribe their satisfactory character to themselves, but to the Grace of God. But for all that, they feel that they are what they ought to be and what others ought to be but are not.

They see in themselves a great deal that is good, very much that is commendable and a large amount of excellence which they can hold up for the admiration of others. They have reached the “higher life” and are wonderfully fond of telling us so—and explaining the phenomena of their self-satisfied condition. Though Paul was compelled to say, “In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing,” their flesh appears to be of a better quality. Whereas he had spiritual conflicts and found that without were fights and within fears, these very superior persons have already trod Satan under their feet and reached a state in which they have little else to do but to divide the spoil.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, whenever we meet with persons who can congratulate themselves upon their personal character, or whenever we get into the state of self-content ourselves, there is an ill savor about the whole concern. I do not know what impression it makes upon you, but whenever I hear a Brother talk about himself, and how full he is of the Spirit of God and all that, I am distressed for him. I think I hear the voice of that stately professor, who said, “God, I thank you that I am not as other men are.” I feel that I would prefer to listen to that other man, who said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and went down to his house justified rather than the other.

When I hear a man crow about himself, I think of Peter’s declaration— “Though all men should deny You, yet will not I,” and I hear another cock crow. Self-complacency is the mother of spiritual declension. David said, “My mountain stands firm: I shall never be moved.” But before long the face of God was hidden and he was troubled. In the presence of a professor who is pleased with his own attainments, one remembers that warning text—“Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.” Great I! Great I! Wherever you are, you must come down! Great I is always opposed to great Christ. John the Baptist knew the Truth when he said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” There is no room in this world for God’s Glory and man’s glory. He who is less than nothing magnifies God, but he “who is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing,” dishonors God. And he “is naked and poor and miserable.”

Furthermore, we have observed that the best of men do not talk of their attainments. Their tone is self-depreciation, not self-content. We have known some eminently holy men, who are now in Heaven, and in looking back upon their lives we note that they were never conscious of being what we all thought them to be. Everybody could see their beauty of character except themselves. They lamented their imperfections while we admired the Grace of God in them. I remember a minister of Christ, now with God—I will not mention his name—if I did, it would be as familiar to your ears as household words. It was proposed by some of us, when he left the ministry in his old age, that we should hold a meeting to bid him farewell and testify our esteem for him.

It was my duty to propose the fraternal act, but I hesitated as I saw the blush mantle his cheek and I paused when he rose and besought us never to think of such a thing, for he felt himself to be one of the most unworthy of all the servants of the Lord. Every man of the associated ministers, that day assembled, felt that our venerable friend was by far the superior of us all—and yet his own estimate of himself was lowest of the lowly. He had sacrificed much, but I never heard him speak of his sacrifices. He lived in habitual fellowship with God, but I never heard him declare it, much less glory in it. Shallow streams brawl and babble, but deep waters flow on in silence! Of all the departed saints whom it has been my lot to esteem highly in love for their works’ sake, I do not remember one who dared to praise himself, though I can remember several poor little spiritual babes who did so to their own injury.

If ever true saints speak of what God has done by them, they do it in such a modest way that you might think they were talking of someone 500 miles away, rather than of themselves. They have scrupulously laid all their crowns at the Savior’s feet, not in word only, but in spirit. When I remember these sacred names of the great departed, I feel it hard to have patience with the unspiritual, unholy boastings of personal holiness and high spirituality which are getting common in these days. Drums make much noise, but we know by observation that it is not their fullness which makes the sound.

Again, we have noticed that we, ourselves, in our own holiest moments, do not feel self-complacent. Whenever we get near to God and really enter into fellowship with Him, the sensations we feel are the very reverse of self-congratulation. Job, in this, was the type of every believing man. Till he saw God he spoke up for his innocence and defended himself against the charges of his friends. But when the Lord revealed Himself to him, he said, “My eyes see You, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” We never see the beauty of Christ without, at the same time, perceiving our own deformity. When we neglect prayer and self-examination we grow into mighty vain fellows, but when we live near to God in private devotion and heart-searching, we put off our ornaments from us. In the light of God’s Countenance we perceive our many flaws and imperfections, and instead of saying, “I am clean,” we cry out, “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!”

Now if this is our own experience, we infer from it that those who think well of themselves must know little of that revealing light which humbles all who dwell in it. My observation of personal character has been somewhat wide and I cannot help bearing my testimony that I am greatly afraid of men who make loud professions of superior sanctity. I have had the misfortune to have known, on one or two occasions, superfine Brethren, who were, in their own ideas, far above the rest of us and almost free from human frailties. I confess to have felt very much humbled by their eminent goodness until I found them out. They talked of complete sanctification, of a faith which never staggered, of an old nature entirely dead until I wondered at them. But I wondered more when I found that all the while they were rotten at the core, were negligent of common duties while boasting of the loftiest spirituality and were even immoral while they condemned others for comparative trifles.

I have now become very suspicious of all who cry up their own wares. I had rather have a humble, timid, fearful, watchful, self-depreciating Christian to be my companion than any of the religious exquisites who crave our admiration. These great-winged eagles who fly so loftily will, I fear, turn out to be unclean birds. The excessive verdure of a super finely flourishing religiousness often covers a horrible bog of hypocrisy. Let me add, once more, that whatever shape self-satisfaction may assume—and it bears a great many—it is at bottom nothing but a shirking of the hardship of Christian soldierhood. The Christian soldier has to fight with sins every day and if he is a man of God and God’s Spirit is in him, he will find he needs all the strength he has, and a great deal more, to maintain his

ground and make progress in the Divine life.

Now, self-contentment is a shirking of the battle, I do not care how it is come by. Some people shirk watchfulness, repentance and holy care by believing that the only sanctification they need is already theirs by imputation. They use the work of the Lord Jesus for them as though it could thrust away the necessity of the Spirit’s work in them. Personal holiness they will not hear of—it is legal. If they come across such a text as, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” or, “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that shall he also reap,” they straightway force another meaning upon it, or else forget it altogether.

Another class believe that they have perfection in the flesh, while a third attain to the same complacent condition by the notion that they have overcome all their sins by believing that they have done so—as if believing your battles to be won was the same thing as winning them! This, which they call faith, I take the liberty to call a lazy, self-conceited presumption. And though they persuade themselves that their sins are dead, it is certain that their carnal security is vigorous enough and highly probable that the rest of their sins are only keeping out of the way to let their pride have room to develop itself to ruinous proportions. You can reach self-complacency by a great many roads. I have known enthusiasts reach it by sheer intoxication of excitement, while Antinomians come at it by imagining that the Law is abolished and that what is sin in others is not sin in saints.

There are theories which afford an evil peace to the mind by throwing all blame of sin upon fate. And others which lower the standard of God’s demands so as to make them reachable by fallen humanity. Some dream that a mere dead faith in Jesus will save them, let them live as they like. And others that they are already as good as need be. Many have fallen into the same condition by another error, for they have said, “Well, we cannot conquer all sin and therefore we need not aim at it. Some of our sins are constitutional and will never be gotten rid of.” Under these evil impressions they sit down and say, “It is well, O Soul, you are in an excellent condition. Sit still and take your ease, there is little more to be done, there is no need to attempt more.”

All this is evil to the last degree. I have used few theological terms, because it does not matter how we get to be self-satisfied, whether by an orthodox or a heterodox mode of reasoning—it is a mischievous thing in any case. The fact is, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord calls us to this high calling of contending with sin within and without until we die! It is of no use of our mincing the matter—we must fight if we would reign—our sins will have to be contended till our dying day and probably we shall have to fight upon our death-bed. Therefore, every day we are bound to be upon our watchtower against sin around and within us. It is of no use our deluding ourselves with pretty theories which act only as spiritual opium to cause unhealthy dreams.

Sin is a real thing with each one of us and must be daily wrestled with—there is an evil heart of unbelief within us and the devil without us—and we must watch, and pray, and cry mightily, and strive, and struggle, and admit that we have not yet apprehended. If we dream that we are at the goal already, we shall stop short of the prize. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. A man full of self cares for nothing more. Shake off these slothful bands, my Brethren! Be strong. You are as weak as others and as likely to sin. Watch, therefore, and pray lest you enter into temptation.

What is it, at bottom, that makes men content with themselves? It may be, first of all, a forgetfulness of the awful holiness of the Law of God. If the Law of the Ten Commandments is to be read only as its letter runs, I could imagine a man’s judging himself and saying, “I have apprehended.” But when we know that the Law is spiritual, how can we be selfcomplacent? My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you think you have reached its perfect height, I ask you to hear these words—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.”

Can you say, in the sight of a heart-searching God, “I have fulfilled all that”? If you can, I am staggered at you and think you the victim of a strong delusion which leads you to believe a lie! Brethren who can take delight in themselves must have lost sight of the heinousness of sin. The least sin is a desperate evil—an assault upon the Throne of God—an insult to the majesty of Heaven. The simple act of plucking the forbidden fruit cost us Paradise. There is a bottomless pit of sin in every transgression, a Hell in every iniquity. If we keep clear of sins of action and if our tongue is so bridled that we avoid every hasty and unadvised speech, yet do we not know that our thoughts and imaginations, our looks and longing of heart, have in them an infinity of evil?

If, after having learned that sin can only be washed out by the death of the Son of God, and that even the flames of Hell cannot make atonement for a single sin, a man can then say, “I am content with myself,” it is to be feared that he has made a fatal mistake as to his own character. Is there not a failure, in such cases, to understand the highest standard of Christian living? If we measure ourselves among ourselves, there are many Believers here who might be pretty well satisfied. You are as generous as other Christians are, considering your income. You are as prayerful as most other professors and as earnest in doing good as any of your neighbors. If you are worldly, yet you are not more worldly than most professors, nowadays, and so you judge yourself not to be far below the standard. But what a standard! Let us seek a better!

Brothers, it is a very healthy thing for us who are ministers to read a biography like that of M’Cheyne. Read that through, if you are a minister, and it will burst many of your windbags. You will find yourselves collapse most terribly. Take the life of Brainerd among the Indians, or of Baxter in our own land. Think of the holiness of George Herbert, the devoutness of Fletcher, or the zeal of Whitfield. Where do you find yourself after reading their lives? Might you not peep about to find a hiding place for your insignificance? When we mix with dwarfs we think ourselves giants. But in the presence of giants we become dwarfs. When we think of the saints departed and remember their patience in suffering, their diligence in labor,

their ardor, their self-denial, their humility, their tears, their prayers, their midnight cries, their intercession for the souls of others, their pouring out their hearts before God for the glory of Christ—why, we shrink into less than nothing and find no word of boasting on our tongue!

If we survey the life of the only perfect One, our dear Lord and Master, the sight of His beauty covers our whole countenance with a blush. He is the lily and we are the thorns. He is the sun and we are as the night. He is all good and we are all evil. In His Presence we bow in the dust, we confess our sins and count ourselves unworthy to unloose His shoe laces. It is to be feared that there is springing up in some parts of the Christian Church a deceitful form of self-righteousness which leads even good people to think too highly of themselves. It is a fashionable form of fanaticism, very pleasing to the flesh, very fascinating and very deadly. Many, I fear, are not really living so near to God as they think they are—neither are they as holy as they dream.

It is very easy to frequent Bible readings, conferences and excited public meetings, and to fill one’s self with the gas of self-esteem. A little pious talk with a sort of Christian who always walks on high stilts will soon tempt you to use the stilts yourself. But indeed, dear Brothers and Sisters, you are a poor, unworthy worm and a nobody—and if you get one inch above the ground you get just that inch too high. Remember, you may think yourself to be very strong in a certain direction because you do not happen to be tried on that point. Many of us are exceedingly goodtempered when nobody provokes us. Some are wonderfully patient because they have a sound constitution and have no racking pains to endure. And others are exceedingly generous because they have more money than they need.

A ship’s seaworthiness is never quite certain till she has been out at sea. The grand thing will be to be sound before the living God in the day of trial. I pray every Believer here to get off his high horse and to remember that he is, “naked and poor and miserable” apart from Christ—and only in Jesus Christ is he anything at all! And if he thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself, but does not deceive God.

II. In the second place, look at Paul as PLACING THE PAST IN ITS TRUE LIGHT. He says, “Forgetting those things which are behind.” What does he mean? Paul does not mean that he forgot the mercy of God which he had enjoyed. Far from it! Paul does not mean that he forgot the sins which he had committed. Far from it—he would always remember them to humble him. We must follow out the figure which he is using and so read him.

When a man ran in the Grecian games, if he had run half way and passed most of his fellows, and had then turned to look round and to rejoice over the distance which he had already covered, he would have lost the race. Suppose he had commenced singing his own praises and said, “I have come down the hill, along the valley, and up the rising ground on this side. See, there are one, two, three, four, five, six runners far behind me.” While thus praising himself he would lose the race. The only hope for the runner was to forget all that was behind and occupy his entire thoughts with the piece of ground which lay in front! Never mind though you have run so far—you must let the space which lies between you and the goal engross all your thoughts and command all your powers.

It must be so with regard to all the sins which we have overcome. Perhaps at this moment you might honestly say, “I have overcome a very fierce temper,” or, “I have bestirred my naturally indolent spirit.” Thank God for that! Stop long enough to say, “Thank God for that,” but do not pause to congratulate yourselves as though some great thing had been done, for then it may soon be undone. Perhaps the very moment you are rejoicing over your conquered temper it will leap back upon you like a lion from the covert, and you will say, “I thought you were dead and buried, and here you are roaring at me again.” The very easiest way to give resurrection to old corruptions is to erect a trophy over their graves—they will at once lift up their heads and howl out, “We are still alive!”

It is a great thing to overcome any sinful habit, but it is necessary to guard against it, still, for you have not conquered it so long as you congratulate yourself upon the conquest. In the same light we must regard all the Grace we have obtained. I know some dear friends who are mighty in prayer and my soul rejoices to join in their supplications. But I should be sorry, indeed, to hear them praise their own prayers. We love yonder Brother for his generosity, but we hope he will never tell others that he is liberal. Yonder dear friend is very humble, but if he were to boast of it, that would be the end of it. Self-esteem is a moth which eats the garments of virtue. Those flies, those pretty flies of self-praise, must be killed, for if they get into your pot of ointment they will spoil it all.

Forget the past! Thank God who has made you pray so well. Thank God who has made you kind, gentle, or humble. Thank God who has made you give liberally. But forget it all and go forward since there is yet very much land to be possessed! And so with all the work for Jesus which we have done. Some people seem to have very good memories as to what they have performed. They used to serve God wonderfully when they were young! They began early and were full of zeal! They can tell you all about it with much pleasure. In middle life they worked marvels and achieved great wonders. But now they rest on their oars. They are giving other people an opportunity to distinguish themselves! Their own heroic age is over.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, as long as ever you are in this world forget what you have already done and go forward to other service! Living on the past is one of the faults of old Churches. We, for instance, as a Church, may begin to congratulate ourselves upon the great things God has done by us, for we shall be sure to put it in that pretty shape, although we shall probably mean the great things we have done ourselves. After praising ourselves thus, we shall gain no further blessing, but shall decline by little and little. The same is true of denominations. What acclamations are heard when allusion is made to what our fathers did! Oh, the name of Carey, Knibb, and Fuller! We Baptists think we have nothing to do now but to go upstairs and go to bed, for we have achieved eternal glory through the names of these good men! And as for our Wesleyan friends, how apt they are to harp upon Wesley, Fletcher, Nelson and other great

men!

Thank God for them! They were grand men! But the right thing is to forget the past and pray for another set of men to carry on the work. We should never be content, but, “On, on, on,” should be our cry! When they asked Napoleon why he continually made wars, he said, “I am the child of war. Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me.” The Christian Church is the child of spiritual war. She only lives as she fights and rides forth conquering and to conquer. God deliver us from the self-congratulatory spirit, however it may come, and make us long and pine after something better!

III. And now the third point. Paul, having put the present and past into their right places, goes on to the future, ASPIRING EAGERLY TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS, for he says, “reaching forth unto those things which are before.” Does he not here give us the picture of a runner? He reaches forth. The man, as he runs, throws himself forward, almost out of the perpendicular. His eyes are already at the goal. His hands are far in advance of his feet. His whole body is leaning forward—he runs as though he would project himself to the end of the journey before his legs can carry him there. That is how the Christian should be—always throwing himself forward after something more than he has yet reached—not satisfied with the rate at which he advances. His soul always going at 20 times the pace of the flesh.

John Bunyan gives us a little parable of the man on horseback. He is bid by his master to ride in a hurry to fetch the physician. But the horse is a sorry jade. “Well,” says Bunyan, “if his master sees that the man on the horse’s back is whipping and spurring, and pulling the bridle and struggling with all his might, he judges that the man would go if he could.” That is how the Christian should always be, not only as devout, earnest and useful as he can be, but panting to be a great deal more so— spurring this old flesh and striving against this laggard spirit—if perhaps he can do more. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to be reaching forward to be like Jesus! Never may we say, “I am like So-and-So, and that is enough.” Am I like Jesus? Perfectly like Jesus? If not—away, away, away from everything I am or have been! I cannot rest until I am like my Lord.

The aim of the Christian is to be perfect—if he seeks to be anything less than perfect, he aims at an object lower than that which God has placed before him. To master every sin and to have and possess and exhibit every virtue—this is the Christian’s ambition. He who would be a great artist must not follow low models. The artist must have a perfect model to copy—if he does not reach to it, he will reach far further than if he had an inferior model to work by. When a man once realizes his own ideal, it is all over with him. A great painter once had finished a picture and he said to his wife with tears in his eyes, “It is all over with me. I shall never paint again, I am a ruined man.” She enquired, “Why?” “Because,” he said, “that painting contents and satisfies me. It realizes my idea of what painting ought to be and therefore I am sure my power is gone, for that power lies in having ideals which I cannot reach, something yet beyond me which I am striving after.”

May none of us ever say, “I have reached my ideal, now I am what I ought to be, there is nothing beyond me.” Perfection, Brothers and Sisters, absolute perfection—may God help us to strive after it! That is the model, “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” “Shall we ever reach it?” asks one. Thousands and millions have reached it— there they are before the Throne of God—their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb! And we shall possess the same, only let us be struggling after it by God’s good help. Let every Believer be striving that in the details of common life, in every thought, in every word, in every action, he may glorify God. This ought to be our objective—if we do not reach it, it is that which we must press for—that from morning light to evening shade we shall live unto God. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This is what we are to seek after, praying always in the Holy Spirit to be sanctified wholly, spirit, soul and body. “It is a wonderfully high standard,” says one. Would you like me to lower it, Brother? I should be very sorry to have it lowered for myself. If the highest degree of holiness were denied to any one of us, it would be a heavy calamity. Is it not the joy of a Christian to be perfectly like his Lord? Who would wish to stop short of it? To be obliged to live under the power of even the least sin forever would be a horrible thing! No, we never can be content short of perfection! We will reach forward towards that which is before.

IV. And now the Apostle is our model, in the fourth place, because he PUTS FORTH ALL HIS EXERTIONS TO REACH THAT WHICH HE DESIRES. He says, “This one thing I do,” as if he had given up all else and addicted himself to one sole object—to aim to be like Jesus Christ! There were many other things Paul might have attempted, but he says, “this one thing I do.” Probably Paul was a poor speaker—why did he not try to make himself a rhetorician? No. He came not with excellency of speech. But you tell me Paul was busy with his tent making. I know he was—what with tent-making, preaching, visiting and watching night and day, he had more than enough to do! But all these were a part of his pursuit of the one thing—he was laboring to serve his Master perfectly and to render himself up as a whole burnt offering unto God.

I invite every soul that has been saved by the precious blood of Christ to gather up all its strength for this one thing—to cultivate a passion for Divine Grace and an intense longing after holiness. Ah, if we could but serve God as God should be served, and be such manner of people as we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness, we should see a new era in the Church. The greatest need of the Church at this day is holiness. Why did Paul pursue holiness with such concentrated purpose? Because he felt God had called him to it. He aimed at the prize of his high calling. God had elected Paul to be a champion against sin. Selected to be Jehovah’s champion, he felt that he must play the man.

Moreover, it was “God in Christ Jesus” who was the choice, and as the

Apostle looked up and saw the mild face of the Redeemer and marked the crown of thorns of the King of Sorrows, he felt he must overcome sin. He could not let a single evil live within him and, though he had not yet apprehended, he felt he must press forward till he had apprehended that to which God in Christ had called him. Moreover, the Apostle saw his crown, the crown of life that fades not away, hanging bright before his eyes. “What,” said he, “shall tempt me from that path of which yon crown is the end? Let the golden apples be thrown in my way, I cannot even look at them, nor stay to spurn them with my feet. Let the sirens sing on either side and seek to charm me with their evil beauty to leave the holy road, but I must not, and I will not. Heaven! Heaven! Heaven! Is not this enough to make a man dash forward in the road there? The end is glorious, what if the running is laborious? When there is such a prize to be had, who will grudge a struggle?”

Paul pressed forward towards the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. He felt he was a saved man and he meant, through the same Grace, to be a holy man. He longed to grasp the crown and hear the, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” which his Master would award him at the end of his course. Brothers and Sisters, I wish I could stir myself and stir you to a passionate longing after a gracious, consistent, godly life! Yes, for an eminently, solidly, thoroughly devoted and consecrated life. You will grieve the Spirit if you walk inconsistently. You will dishonor the Lord that bought you. You will weaken the Church. You will bring shame upon yourself. Even though you are “saved so as by fire,” it will be an evil and a bitter thing to have in any measure departed from God. But to be always going onward, to be never self-satisfied, to be always laboring to be better Christians, to be aiming at the rarest sanctity—this shall be your honor, the Church’s comfort and the glory of God!

May the Lord help you to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Amen. PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #102 New Park Street Pulpit 1

÷Php 3.18

FALSE PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED  
NO. 102

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”**

*Php 3:18-19***.**

PAUL was the very model of what a Christian minister should be. He was a watchful shepherd over the flock. He did not simply preach to them and consider that he had done all his duty when he had delivered his message. His eyes were always upon the churches, marking their spiritual welfare, their growth in Divine Grace, or their declension in godliness. He was the unsleeping guardian of their spiritual welfare. When he was called away to other lands to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, he always seems to have kept an eye upon those Christian colonies which he had founded in the midst of heathen darkness. While lighting other lamps with the torch of Truth, he did not fail to trim the lamps already burning. Here you observe he was not indifferent to the character of the little Church at Philippi, for he speaks to them and warns them.

Note, too, that the Apostle was a very honest pastor—when he marked anything amiss in his people, he did not blush to tell them. He was not like your modern minister, whose pride is that he never was personal in his life and who thus glories in his shame. For if he were honest, he would be personal, for he would deal out the Truth of God without deceitfulness and would reprove men sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. “I tell you,” says Paul, “because it concerns you.” Paul was very honest—he did not flinch from telling the whole Truth and telling it often, too, though some might think that once from the lip of Paul would be of more effect than a hundred times from anyone else. “I have told you often,” says he, “and I tell you yet again that there are some who are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

And while faithful, you will notice that the Apostle was, as every true minister should be, extremely affectionate. He could not bear to think that any of the members of the Churches under his care should swerve from the Truth. He wept while he denounced them—he knew not how to wield the thunderbolt with tearless eyes. He did not know how to pronounce the threat of God with a dry and husky voice. No—while he spoke terrible things, the tears were in his eyes and when he reproved sharply, his heart beat so fast with love that those who heard him denounce so solemnly were yet convinced that his harshest words were dictated by affection! “I have told you often, and I tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Beloved, I have a message to deliver tonight which is to the same effect as that of the Apostle Paul and I am afraid it is as necessary, now, as it was in his time. There are many now among us, as there were then, who walk in such a manner that we recognize them at once as the “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I fear that the evil, instead of having decreased, has multiplied and grown in danger! We have more profession, now, than there was in the age of Paul and, consequently, we have more hypocrisy. It is a crying sin with our Churches that there are many in their midst who never ought to be there—who would be fit members of an ale-house or any favorite resort of the merry and frivolous, but who never ought to sip the sacramental wine or eat the holy bread, the emblems of the sufferings of our Lord! We have—O Paul, how would you have said it, tonight, and how would you have wept while saying it!—we have many in our midst who are the “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because “their god is their belly, they mind earthly things,” and their life is not consistent with the great things of God!

I shall endeavor, for a short time, tonight, to tell you the reason of the Apostle’s extraordinary sorrow. I never read that the Apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they plowed his back with furrows, I believe that never was a tear seen to gush from his eyes while the soldiers scourged him! Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning! I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he, himself, was exposed for Christ’s sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials! He wept for three things—he wept on account of their guilt—on account of the ill effects of their conduct and on account of their doom.

I. First, Paul wept on account of the GUILT of those persons who, having a name to live, were dead. While uniting themselves with a Christian Church, they were not walking as they should among men and before God. Notice the sin with which he charges them. He says, “Their god was their belly.” By this I understand that they were sensual persons. There were those in the early Church who, after they sat at God’s Table, would go away and sit at the feasts of the heathen and there indulge in gluttony and drunkenness. Others indulged in lusts of the flesh, enjoying those pleasures (so miscalled) which, afterwards, bring unutterable pain even to the body, itself, and are disgraceful to men—much more to professors of religion! Their god was their belly. They cared more about the dress of their body than the dress of their soul. They regarded more the food of the outward carcass than the life of the inner man. Ah, my Hearers—are there not many everywhere in our churches who still bow before their belly-god and make themselves their own idols? Is it not notorious, in almost every society, that professing men can pamper themselves as much as others?—I mean not all, but some. Yes, I have heard of drunken professors. Not men who positively reel through the street, who are drunk in midday, or intoxicated before their fellow men, but men who go to the very verge of drunkenness in their social parties. Men who take so much that while it would be an insult to their respectability to call them intoxicated, it would equally be an insult to the truth to call them sober! Have we not some men in our Churches (it is idle to deny it) who are as fond of the excesses of the table and of the good things of this life as any other class of men? Have we not persons who spend a very fortune upon the dress of their bodies, adorning themselves far more than they adorn the Doctrine of their Savior—men whose perpetual business it is to take good care of their bodies, against whom flesh and blood never had any cause to complain—for they not only serve the flesh, but make a god of it? Ah, Sirs, the Church is not pure! The Church is not perfect—we have scabbed sheep in the flock. In our own little communion, now and then, we find them out and then comes the dread sentence of excommunication, by which they are cut off from our fellowship. But there are many of whom we are not aware, who creep like snakes along the grass and are not discovered till they inflict a grievous wound upon religion and do damage to our great and glorious cause. Brothers and Sisters, there are some in the Church (both Established and Dissenting)—let us say it with the deepest sorrow—“whose god is their belly.”

Another of their sins was that they did mind earthly things. Beloved, the last sentence may not have touched your consciences, but this is a very sweeping assertion! I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christ’s Church are verily guilty here. It is an anomaly, but it is a fact that we hear of ambitious Christians. Although Christ has told us that he who would be exalted, must humble himself, there are among the professed followers of the humble Man of Galilee men who strive to gain the topmost round of the ladder of this world! Their aim is not to magnify Christ, but to magnify themselves at any cost. It had been thought at one time that a Christian would be a holy, a humble and contented man— but it is not so nowadays! We have (oh, shame on you Churches!) mere professors—men who are as worldly as the worldliest and have no more of Christ’s Holy Spirit in them than the most carnal who never made a profession of the Truth of God. Again, it is a paradox, but it stares us in the face every day, that we have covetous Christians. It is an inconsistency. We might as well talk of unholy seraphim, of perfect beings subject to sin, as of covetous Christians! Yet there are such men—whose purse strings were never intended to slide, at least at the cry of the poor—who call it prudence to amass wealth and never use it in any degree in the cause of Christ. If you want men that are hard in business, that are grasping after wealth, that seize upon the poor debtor and suck the last particle of his blood—if you want the men who are grasping and grinding, that will skin the flint and take away the very life from the orphan, you must come—I blush to say it, but it is a solemn truth—you must sometimes come to our Churches to find them! Some such there are among the highest of her officers, who “mind earthly things” and have none of that devotion to Christ which is the mark of pure godliness! These evils are not the fruits of religion—they are the diseases of mere profession! I rejoice that the remnant of the elect are kept pure from these, but the “mixed multitude” are sadly possessed therewith.

Another character which the Apostle gives of these men is that they gloried in their shame. A professing sinner generally glories in his shame more than anyone else. In fact, he miscalls it. He labels the devil’s poisons with the names of Christ’s medicines! Things that he would reckon vices in any other man, are virtues with himself. If he could see in another man the same action which he has just performed—if another could be the mirror of himself—oh, how he would thunder at him! He is the very first man to notice a little inconsistency. He is the very strictest of Sabbatarians. He is the most upright of thieves. He is the most tremendously generous of misers. He is the most marvelously holy of profane men. While he can indulge in his favorite sin, he is forever putting up his glass to his eye to magnify the faults of others. He may do as he pleases, he may sin with impunity—and if his minister should hint to him that his conduct is inconsistent, he will make a storm in the Church and say the minister was personal and insulted him! Reproof is thrown away upon him. Is he not a member of the Church? Has he not been so for years? Who shall dare to say that he is unholy? O Sirs, there are some of your members of Churches who will one day be in Hell! We have some united with our churches who have passed through Baptism and sit at our sacramental tables, who, while they have a name to live, are dead as corpses in their graves as to anything spiritual! It is an easy thing to palm yourself off for a godly man, nowadays. There is little self-denial, little mortification of the flesh, little love to Christ. Oh, no. Learn a few religious hymns—get a few phrases and you will deceive the very elect! Enter into the Church, be called respectable and if you cannot make all believe you, you will yet smooth your path to destruction by quieting an uneasy conscience! I am saying harsh things, but I am saying true things. My blood sometimes boils when I meet with men whom I would not acknowledge, whom I would not sit with anywhere and yet, who call me, “Brother.” They can live in sin and yet call a Christian, “Brother.” God forgive them! We can feel no brotherhood with them—nor do we wish to do so until their lives are changed and their conduct is made more consistent!

You see, then, in the Apostle’s days there were some who were a disgrace to godliness and the Apostle wept over them because he knew their guilt. Why, it is guilt enough for a man to make a god of his belly without being a professor—but how much worse for a man who knows better? Worse, even, for one who even sets up to teach other people, still to go on and sin against God and against his conscience by making a solemn profession, which is found, in his case, to be a lie. Oh, how dreadful is such a man’s guilt! For him to stand up and say—

***“ ‘Tis done; the great transaction’s done.***

***I am th e Lord’s and He is mine,”***and yet to go and sin like others—to use the same conversation, to practice the same chicanery, to walk in as ungodly a manner as those who have never named the name of Christ—ah, what guilt is here! It is enough to make us weep if we have been guilty ourselves! Yes, to weep tears of blood that we should so have sinned against God.

**II.** But the Apostle did not so much weep for them as for THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING, for he says, emphatically, that they are, “The enemies of the Cross of Christ.” “*The* enemies.” As much as to say, the infidel is *an* enemy. The curser, the swearer, the profane man, is an enemy. Herod, yonder, the persecutor, is an enemy—but these men are the chief soldiers—the lifeguards in Satan’s army. “*The* enemies of the Cross of Christ” are Pharisaic professors, bright with the whitewash of outside godliness, while they are rotten within. Oh, methinks there is nothing that should grieve a Christian more than to know that Christ has been wounded in the house of His friends.

See, there comes my Savior with bleeding hands and feet. O my Jesus, my Jesus, who shed that blood? Where did You get that wound? Why do You look so sad? He replies, “I have been wounded, but guess where I received the blow?” Why, Lord, surely You were wounded in the gin palace. You were wounded where sinners meet, in the seat of the scornful. You were wounded in the infidel hall. “No, I was not,” says Christ, “I was wounded in the house of My friends. These scars were made by those who sat at My table and bore My name and talked My language. *They* pierced Me and crucified Me afresh and put Me to an open shame.”

Far worst of sinners, they that pierce Christ thus, while professing to be friends. Caesar wept not until Brutus stabbed him. Then it was that he was overcome and exclaimed, “*Et tu, Brute*?” And you, “Have *you* stabbed me?” So, my Hearers, might Christ say to some of you. “What? You and you and you, Professors, have you stabbed Me?” Well might our Savior muffle up His face in grief, or rather bind it in clouds of wrath and drive the wretch away that has so injured His cause.

If I must be defeated in battle, let me be defeated by my enemies, but let me not be betrayed by my friends. If I must yield the citadel which I am willing to defend even to the death, then let me yield it and let my foes walk over my body. But oh, let not my friends betray me. Let not the warrior who stands by my side open the gate and admit the enemy. That were enough to break one’s heart twice—once for the defeat and the second time at the thought of treachery.

When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain and they themselves were weary and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defense of the cause they had espoused. On a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek. The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity and when the commander turned his eye to see, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth and stamped his foot, for he knew that some coward Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends. Then turning to his friends, he said, “On!” and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies—ready now to die—for a friend had betrayed them.

So feels the bold-hearted Christian, when he sees his fellow member betraying Christ, when he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretended to be its friends. Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the Church, than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside. Our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty “wolves in sheep’s clothing” that devour the flock. It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of Divine indignation and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Now, for a moment, let me show you how it is that the wicked professor is the greatest enemy to Christ’s Church. In the first place, *he grieves the Church more than anyone else*. If any man in the street were to pelt me with mud, I believe I should thank him for the honor if I knew him to be a bad character and knew that he hated me for righteousness sake. But if one who called himself a Christian should injure the cause with the filthiness of his own licentious behavior—ah, that were more injurious then the stakes of Smithfield, or the racks of the Tower. The deepest sighs the Christian has ever heaved have been fetched from him by carnal professors. I would not weep a tear if every man should curse me who was a hater of Christ. But when the professor forsakes Christ and betrays His cause—ah, that indeed is grievous—and who is he that can keep back the tear on account of so vile a deed?   
Again—*nothing divides the Church more*. I have seen many divisions in journeying through the country and I believe almost every division may be traced to a deficiency of piety on the part of some of the members. We should be more one, if it were not for cants that creep into our midst. We should be more loving to each other, more tender-hearted, more kind, but that these men, so deceptive, coming into our midst, render us suspicious. Moreover, they themselves find fault with those who walk worthily in order to hide their own faults against God and against justice. The greatest sorrows of the Church have been brought upon her, not by the arrows shot by her foes, not by the discharge of the artillery of Hell— but by fires lit in her own midst by those who have crept into her in the guise of good men and true but who were spies in the camp and traitors to the cause.   
Yet again—*nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more than this*. Many sinners coming to Christ would get relief far more easily and find peace far more quickly if it were not for the ill lives of false professors. Now let me tell you a story, which I remember telling once before—it is a very solemn one. I hope to feel its power myself and I pray that all of you may do the same. A young minister had been preaching in a country village and the sermon apparently took deep effect on the minds of the hearers in the congregation. There was a young man who felt acutely the Truth of the solemn words to which the preacher had given utterance. He sought the preacher after the service and walked home with him. On the road, the minister talked of every subject except the one that had occupied his attention in the pulpit. The poor soul was under great distress and he asked the minister a question or two, but they were put off very coolly, as if the matter was of no great importance.   
Arriving at the house, several friends were gathered together and the preacher commenced very freely to crack jokes, to utter his funny expressions and to set the company in a roar of laughter. That, perhaps, might not have been so bad, had he not gone even farther and uttered words which were utterly false and verged upon the licentious. The young man suddenly rose from the table—and though he had wept under the sermon and had been under the deepest apparent conviction, he rose up and went outside the door. Stamping his foot, he said, “Religion is a lie! From this moment I abjure God, I abjure Christ and if I am damned I will be damned, but I will lay the charge at that man’s door, for he preached just now and made me weep, but now see what he is! He is a liar and I will never hear him again.”   
He carried out his threat. And some time afterwards, as he lay dying, he sent word to the minister that he wanted to see him. The minister had removed to a distant part but had been brought there by Providence, I believe purposely, to chasten him for the great sin he had committed. The minister stepped into the room with a Bible in his hand to do as he was accustomed—to read a chapter and to pray with the poor man. Turning his eyes on him, the man said, “Sir, I remember hearing you preach once.” “Blessed be God,” said the minister, “I thank God for it,” thinking, no doubt, that he was a convert and rejoicing over him.   
“Stop,” said the man, “I do not know that there is much reason for thanking God, at any rate, on my part. Sir, do you remember preaching from such-and-such a text on such-and-such an evening?” “Yes, I do.” “I trembled then, Sir, I shook from head to foot. I left with the intention of bending the knee in prayer and seeking God in Christ, but do you remember going to such-and-such a house and what you said there!” “No,” said the minister, “I cannot.” “Well, then, I can tell you and mark you—through what you said that night my soul is damned and as true as I am a living man I will meet you at God’s bar and lay it to your charge.” The man then shut his eyes and died. I think you can scarcely imagine what must have been the feeling of that preacher as he retired from the bedside. He must carry with him always that horrid, that terrible incubus, that there was a soul in Hell who laid his blood to his charge.   
I am afraid there are some in the ranks of the Church who have much guilt at their doors on this account. Many a young man has been driven from a solemn consideration of the Truth by the harsh and censorious remarks of Scribes and Pharisees. Many a careful seeker has been prejudiced against sound doctrine by the evil lives of its professors. Ah, you Scribes and Pharisees, you enter not in yourselves and them that would enter in you hinder. You take the key of knowledge, lock up the door by your inconsistencies and drive men away by your unholy living.   
Again—they are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because *they give the devil more theme for laughter* and the enemy more cause for joy, than any other class of Christians. I do not care what all the infidel lecturers in the world like to say. They are very clever fellows, no doubt, and good they have to be to prove an absurdity and “make the worse appear the better reason.” But we care little what they say. They may say what they like against us that is false, but it is when they can say anything that is true about us that we do not like it. It is when they can find a real inconsistency in us and then bring it to our charge, that they have got stuff to make lectures of.   
If a man is an upright Christian, he never need fear what others say of him. They will get but little fun out of him if he leads a holy, blameless life. But let him be sometimes godly and at other times ungodly—then he may grieve—for he has given the enemy cause to blaspheme by his unholy living. The devil gets much advantage over the Church by the inconsistency of professors. It is when Satan makes hypocrites that he brings the great battering ram against the wall. “Your lives are not consistent”—ah, that is the greatest battering ram that Satan can use against the cause of Christ. Be particular, my dear Friends, be very particular that you do not dishonor the cause you profess to love by living in sin and walking in iniquity.   
And let me say a word to those of you who, like myself, are strong Calvinists. No class of persons are more maligned than we. It is commonly said that our doctrine is licentious. We are called Antinomians. We are cried down as *hypers.* We are reckoned the scum of Creation. Scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favorably of us because we hold strong views upon the Divine Sovereignty of God and His Divine electing and special love towards His own people. In many towns the legal ministers will tell you that there is a nasty nest of people there, who they say are Antinomians—such a strange set of creatures. Very likely, if a good minister enters the pulpit, when he has done his sermon, up comes some man and grasps his hand and says, “Ah, Brother, I am glad to see you down here. Sixteen ounces to the pound today—our minister gives us nothing but milk and water.” “Where do you go?” he asks. “Oh, I attend a little room where we labor to exalt free grace alone.” “Ah, then you belong to that nasty set of Antinomians our minister was telling us of just now.”   
Then you begin to talk with him and you find that if he is an Antinomian you should very much like to be one yourself. Very possibly he is one of the most spiritual men in the village. He knows so much of God that he really cannot sit down under a legal ministry. He understands so much of free grace that he is obliged to turn out or else he would be starved to death. It is common to cry down those who love God, or rather, who not only love God, but love all that God has said and who hold the Truth firmly. Let us then, not as Christians only, but as being a peculiar class of Christians, take care that we give no handle to the enemy but that our lives are so consistent that we do nothing to disgrace that cause which is dear to us as our lives and which we hope to maintain faithfully unto death.   
**III.** Lastly, Paul wept, BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM. “Their end is destruction.” Mark—the end of a professing man who has been a hypocrite will be *emphatically destruction*. If there are chains in Hell more heavy than others—if there are dungeons in Hell more dark than others—if there are racks that shall more fearfully torment the frame—if there are fires that shall more tremendously scorch the body—if there are pangs that shall more effectually twist the soul in agonies, *PROFESSING Christians* must have them if they are found rotten at last. I had rather die a profligate than die a lying professor. I think I had rather die the worse sweeping of the street than die a hypocrite. Oh, to have had a name to live and yet to have proved insincere!   
The higher the soar the greater the fall. This man has soared high, how low must he tumble when he finds himself mistaken! He who thought to put to his mouth the nectared cup of Heaven, finds when he quaffs the bowl that it is the very draught of Hell. He who hoped to enter through the gates into the city finds the gates shut and he himself bid to depart as an unknown stranger. Oh, how terrible is that sentence, “Depart from Me, I never knew you!” I think I had rather hear it said to me, “Depart accursed, among the rest of the wicked,” than to be singled out and to have it said, after exclaiming, “Lord, Lord,” “Depart from Me. I know you not. Though you ate and drank in My courts, though you came to My sanctuary you are a stranger to Me and I am a stranger to you.” Such a doom, more horrible than Hell, more direful than fate, more desperate than despair, must be the inevitable lot of those “whose God is their belly,” who have “gloried in their shame,” and “minded earthly things.”   
Now I dare say most of you will say, “Well, he has stirred the churches up tonight. If he has not spoken earnestly, he has spoken harshly, at any rate.” “Ah,” says one, “I dare say it is very true. They are all a set of cants and hypocrites. I always thought so. I shall not go among them, none of them are genuine.” Stop a bit, my Friend, I did not say they were *all* so. I should be very wicked if I did. The very fact that there are hypocrites proves that all are not so. “How is that?” you say. Do you think there would be any bad bank notes in the world if there were no good ones? Do you think anyone would try and circulate bad sovereigns if there were no really good ones? No, I think not. It is the good bank note that makes the bad one, by prompting the wicked man to imitate it and produce a forgery. It is the very fact that there is gold in the world that makes another try to imitate the metal and so to cheat his neighbor.   
If there were no true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. It is the excellence of the Christian character which makes men seek after it and because they have not the real heart of oak, they try to grain their lives to look like it. Because they have not the real solid metal, they try to gild themselves to imitate it. You must have a few brains left and those are enough to tell you that if there are hypocrites, there must be some who are genuine. “Ah,” says another, “quite right. There are many genuine ones and I can tell you, whatever you may think, I am genuine enough. I never had a doubt or fear. I know I was chosen of God. And though I do not exactly live as I could wish, I know if I do not go to Heaven, very few will ever have a chance. Why, Sir, I have been a deacon the last ten years and a member twenty. And I am not to be shaken by anything you say. As for my neighbor there, who sits near me, I do not think he ought to be so sure. But I have never had a doubt for thirty years.”  
Oh my dear Friend, can you excuse me? *I will doubt for you*. If you have no doubt yourself, I begin to doubt. If you are quite so sure, I really must suspect you. For I have noticed that true Christians are the most suspicious in the world—they are always afraid of themselves. I never met with a truly good man but he always felt he was not good enough. And as you are so particularly good, you must excuse me if I cannot quite endorse your security. You may be very good but if you will take a trifle of my advice, I recommend you to “examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith,” lest, being puffed up by your carnal fleshly mind, you fall into the snare of the Wicked One. “Not too sure,” is a very good motto for the Christian. “Make your calling and election sure” if you like—but do not make your opinion of yourself so sure.   
Take care of presumption. Many a good man in his own esteem has been a very devil in God’s eyes. Many a pious soul in the esteem of the Church has been nothing but rottenness in the esteem of God. Let us then try ourselves. Let us say, “Search us, O God and try our hearts; see if there is any wicked way in us and lead us in the way everlasting.” If you shall be sent home with such a thought, I shall bless God that the sermon was not altogether in vain.   
But there are some here who say that it does not matter whether they are in Christ or not. They intend to go on trifling still, despising God and laughing at His name. Mark this, Sinner—the cry that does for one day won’t do forever. And though you talk of religion now as if it were a mere trifle, mark you men—you will want it by-and-bye. You are on board ship and you laugh at the life-boat, because there is no storm. You will be glad enough to leap into it if you are able when the storm shall come. Now you say Christ is nothing because you do not want Him. But when the storm of vengeance comes and death lays hold upon you, mark me—you will howl after Christ. Though you will not pray for Him now, you will shriek after Him then. Though you will not call for Him now, your heart will burst for Him then. Though you will not even desire Him now, “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel.” The Lord bring you to Himself and make you His true and genuine children, that you may not know destruction, but that you may be saved now and saved forever! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2553 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST NO. 2553

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 23, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER. 26 1884.

**“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose**

**glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.** *Php 3:18-19***.**

IT would seem, dear Friends, that there have been trials and difficulties connected with the Church of Christ in every age. We dream that our temptations are worse than those of our fathers, but they are not. We fancy that the Church is subject to worse diseases than in her early days, but it is not so. Paul had to complain that even in the Church at Philippi, which was about as good as any, and in some respects much better than most of the Churches, there were false teachers, and falseliving men, who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were, in fact, the worst enemies of the Cross of Christ. One thing I wish and that is that, instead of brooding over our present difficulties, we would take them to the Lord in prayer and faith—and so triumph over them. But, at the same time, I wish that we had the same tenderness of heart for the Glory of God which was felt by the Apostle. That we were as sensitive as he was of anything that reflected upon the Divine honor, as jealous as he was, even to tears, lest any who professed to be the friends of the Cross should, by their lives, turn out to be its worst enemies. Oh, for more of Paul’s zeal for God as the great motive power of our life, so that we might feel that it mattered little how anything else went so long as the Grace of Christ triumphed, men were saved and God’s name was glorified! The Lord bring us to that state of mind! We shall then feel the sins of today even more acutely than we do at present—and we shall the more confidently trust in God as we seek to overcome them.

I am not going to confine the text to its immediate connection with the church at Philippi, but I shall take it on a somewhat larger scale. Is it not startling to read of, “enemies of the Cross of Christ”? One would naturally have supposed that a remedy so wondrous and so effectual as the Atonement would have been gladly received by souls sick unto death with sin. It might have been predicted by any man who judged, concerning the future, that no sooner would the Son of God descend from Heaven to earth—and die to put away human sin—than men would come flocking by millions to adore Him—and would feel as if they could not give Him a sufficiently hearty welcome! Yes, but the fact that there ever was a Cross shows how depraved is the human heart, how great the Fall that needed such a Sacrifice, how deep the depravity that committed such a murder as that of Calvary! Man, you are beside yourself, indeed, and gone back out of the way and, therefore, it is not far-fetched that you should be an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Yet it seems very startling to me as I picture the scene—a bleeding Christ and enemies gathered about the Cross whereon He dies for them! Then, a weeping Apostle warning the Church of God—the messenger of Christ in tears as he delivers the warning—yet Christ’s enemies still unmoved, perhaps pretending to be His friends, but remaining hostile to Him all the while. It is a strange conglomerate of amazing things—a Savior full of love and man full of hate—a preacher with a heart so broken that he rather weeps than preaches, and a congregation with hearts so hard that, though he has told them the Truth of God again and again, they do not regard it!

Let that striking mixture of opposing elements stand before you, now, while I begin to expound the text.  
I. First, let us enquire, WHAT IS THIS CROSS OF CHRIST to which some men are sadly said to be enemies?  
Of course, it is not the material cross. It is not anything made in the shape of the cross. There are some who can fall down and adore a cross of wood, or stone, or gold, but I cannot conceive of a greater wounding of the heart of Christ than to pay reverence to anything in the shape of a cross, or to bow before a crucifix! I think the Savior must say, “What? What? Am I the Son of God and do they make even Me into an idol? I who have died to redeem men from their idolatries, am I, Myself, taken and carved, and chiseled, and molten, and set up as an image to be worshipped by the sons of men?” When God says, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them,” it is a strange fantasy of human guilt that men should say, “We will even take the image of the Son of God, or some ghastly counterfeit that purports to be His image, and will bow down and worship it, as if to make the Christ of God an accomplice in an act of rebellion against the commandment of the holy Law.” No, it is not the material cross to which Paul alludes—we have nothing to do with those outward symbols! We might have used them much more, but they have been so perverted to idolatry that some of us almost shudder at the very sight of them!  
What is the Cross of Christ, then? Well, first, it is that doctrine which is the center of His holy religion, the Doctrine of the Atonement. By the Cross we mean that the Son of God did actually and literally die, nailed to a Roman gibbet as a malefactor—numbered with the transgressors— doing this because He had, of His own voluntary will, taken upon Himself the sin of His people and, being found with that sin upon Him, He must expiate it by His death. He must lay down His life, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” As it is written, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Now, they who oppose this doctrine are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and they who accept this Atonement and repose their entire confidence upon it, are the friends of the Cross of Christ. They think of that Sacrifice on Calvary with reverence linked with love. They never know how sufficiently to speak of it with adoring gratitude that ever such a Victim should have been presented—the Father, Himself, giving Him— and that such a Victim should ever have been slain, the Lord resigning His life for us! Oh, it is amazing and more than amazing—a miracle that carries every other miracle within itself—greater and more Divine than all the deeds whereof poets have sung, even though they are the deeds of God, Himself, for in this He has excelled Himself—  
*“God, in the Person of His Son,  
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”*  
They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” who try to belittle this great Atonement and to make it out to be a very small affair, next to nothing in importance. As I have often said of some preachers, they teach that Jesus Christ did something or other, which in some way or other, is in some measure or other connected with our salvation. We do not teach any such hazy ideas as that! We say that He laid down His life for the sheep and that for those sheep He has made a perfect, complete and effectual Redemption by which He has delivered them from the wrath to come. Blessed is he who rejoices in that Doctrine of the Cross of Christ!  
But by the Cross is sometimes meant, in Scripture, the Gospel which is the outflow of that central doctrine. And what is that Gospel? Why, that, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And that, “He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” which word of reconciliation is this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” This is the Gospel which we proclaim—“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” As we preach this Gospel to the sons of men, we hear Christ crying to them through us, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” It is a promise of free, instantaneous, perfect, irreversible, everlasting pardon to all who will believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for He is—mark this word—“the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”  
Other salvation there is none than that which lies in His hands, but He has opened His hands upon the Cross and to-day He supplies the needs of every sinner who comes and trusts Him. He who quarrels with that Doctrine is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Whether he makes Baptism to be the modus of salvation, or sets up any rite or ceremony whatever, whether Divinely-appointed or humanly-invented, he is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Circumcision was venerable, it pertained to the fathers and was the seal of the ancient Covenant—but even it became an evil thing when the false teachers would have had the Gentile converts to be circumcised that they might escape from bearing the Cross of Christ— and might trust in circumcision instead of in Christ, alone! “For,” says Paul, “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” The Doctrine of Justification by Faith is the Gospel—I know no other, and I wish to know no other. “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” But, alas, there are still many who are enemies of that Doctrine, and so are, “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
The Cross of Christ is sometimes put in Scripture for the life which is the result of faith in Christ. What kind of life should that be? Well, first, a life of self-denial. No man who is the friend of the Cross of Christ will give license to his passions, or indulgence to his appetites. If he does so, he proves that he is the enemy of the Cross of Christ. No man will seek honor for himself who has known that Christ has bought him with His blood. He will not, he cannot, he dare not live for himself, either in the accumulating of wealth, or the getting of fame, or the enjoyment of pleasure. His first, chief, master thought is, “For Jesus Christ all things—all things in Him, and for Him, and to Him, seeing that He has redeemed us with His precious blood.” They who shirk His service, who take no interest in holy enterprises, who just try to live to themselves— your eaters and your drinkers, your hoarders and your men and women who are always adorning the body, but never consecrating their souls to God—these are they who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” It galls their shoulders and they will not bear it, so they turn aside to ways of their own.  
II. Now, secondly, WHY ARE MEN ENEMIES OF THIS CROSS OF CHRIST?  
Frankly, I think that some do not know why they are. “Let me tell you the Gospel,” says a kind friend. “I do not want to hear it.” “Here is a little book which has been very useful to many.” “I do not want your books.” Do you not know the liberal-minded people that we have in the world now? When they speak, or when they write, it is all about charity and liberality—they hate bigots! Dear, dear, dear, is it not amazing that they do not hate themselves because they will not tolerate the very notion of true religion? “Why!” says one, “that Book is not true.” Did you ever read it? “No.” I thought so. We almost always find that the men who reject the New Testament never read it through and never mean to do so. Nicodemus wisely asked, “Does our Law judge any man before it hears him?” Our lawless ones do! And there are multitudes of men who ought to think themselves as mean as dirt because they never gave Christ a hearing—yet they thrust Him from them. “Oh!” says one, “I should never go inside any of those canting Methodist places.” No, you are such a wonderful man that you think you can see through a stone wall and judge of what goes on inside—you do not need to be taught because you imagine you already know everything! I believe that in London there is a vast amount of prejudice against true religion which is based upon nothing at all. The people do not know what the Gospel is and, in part, this is our hope, for if we can but bring the blessed Truth of Christ to bear upon some of these men, it will be like plowing up virgin soil in the western states of America—we may hope to reap a glorious harvest. God grant that we may!  
But there are some who are “enemies of the Cross of Christ” for reasons which they would not like to confess. Some, because the Cross of Christ hurts their pride. Why should they need to be pardoned? They have done nothing amiss—they are as good as most people and a great deal better than many! You speak to one of them and he says, “Do not talk to me as if you thought I was going to be lost. I do not know anybody who can find fault with me. I really think that I am an example to others.” Just so and, therefore, of course you hate the Cross of Christ! No man who is well likes medicine—how we laugh at the doctors when we feel all right! What jests we make about their calling! It is only when we begin to feel strange that we send for a medical man. And it is just so with men spiritually—as long as they are whole, they need not the Great Physician. While they think they are righteous, they reject the righteousness of Christ.  
Others, too, abhor the Cross of Christ because the Gospel is so simple. They belong to a club and they take in a Quarterly Review. And though they do not know very much about any one thing, yet they know a little about a great many things. They just get a smattering of various kinds of knowledge and they think they are wonderfully clever. Do you not notice the development of their foreheads? You cannot expect that they would have anything to do with the Gospel that would suit a servant girl! The religion that fits Jack, Tom and Harry is not grand enough for them. Why, they actually had a distant relative who was connected with a Baronet, so of course we cannot expect such gentlemen as they are to be saved simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ! The Gospel is too plain, too easy, for them. O Sirs, would you like to have it made difficult, that all the poor ignorant people in the world might perish just to please you? Let me remind you that such a man as Sir Isaac

Newton, who had one of the greatest of all human minds, gloried in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and felt it all too great for him. And in our days, such a truly scientific man as Faraday bowed meekly before the Divine Savior and looked up and found everything in Him. Yet some foolish people think they know better than the eternal God so they hate the Cross of Christ. Self-conceit is the reason of much of the opposition of men to Christ.  
Besides, although the Cross of Christ is lifted high, as the one hope for guilty sinners, it is the most terribly holy thing beneath the cope of Heaven. That Cross, blood red from His dear wounds, frightens away sin, though it draws sinners near itself. That Christ of God, making Atonement with bloody sweat, pierced hands and anguished cry of, “Why have You forsaken Me?” is the most powerful preacher of godly living whose voice was ever heard among the sons of men! Not only do sins acknowledged to be black by society in general flee from the light of the Cross, but even secret sins fly before the blaze of God’s mingled vengeance and love upon the accursed tree! The Cross is the birthplace of Puritans—the men who must be clean, who will not touch your filthy world and its amusements and nine-tenths of its engagements. These are the men who have sat beneath the midday midnight of a dying Savior’s griefs and heard Him cry, “I thirst,” as He bore the guilt of sinners. But, alas, multitudes of men do not want holiness—they want their harlots, they want their wine, they want their carnivals of vice, they want their selfishness and they want everything that Christ does not give, so they cry, “Not this Man, but Barabbas,” and they make the awful choice of sin as they neglect their Lord! These are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
III. I cannot go further into that painful part of the subject, for time fails me, and I want next, to enquire, WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH?  
Paul is evidently alluding here to some who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were really “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I do believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the description given of them is true of many in our day. Here is what the Apostle said of them, “Whose God is their belly.” That surely means self-indulgence and applies to professing Christians who never restrain their appetites, or their desires, or their passions—who are sensual while they boast of being spiritual—who are altogether given up to self-indulgence and yet claim to be followers of the Man of Sorrows who gave up everything for the good of others. That is the first kind of “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
Next are those who are the subjects of shameful pride—“whose glory is in their shame.” That is to say, they boast of things of which they ought to be ashamed. Do you not know some who can grind down the wages of their employees and boast that they have done a clever and business-like thing—and then go and “take the sacrament”? Think of the poor starving needlewomen who, if they sew their souls away, cannot get bread enough to appease their hunger! I do not know who it is who oppresses them so cruelly, but I should not wonder if their taskmasters do not even think that they will go to Heaven—I shall be surprised if they are not very greatly mistaken! Then there are others who are the prey of avarice, and they boast of what they can save. They never give anything to the poor, they seem to think that it is wrong to do so. They even found a Society to stop it! God gives to the evil as well as to the good, but they give to no one! They call their methods, “political economy,” and glory that they save so much which others would have given away. As to the cause of God, one wretched creature boasted that his soul did not cost him a shilling a year! Somebody said that such a sum would be too great an expense for such a miserable soul as his, and we hardly wonder at the sarcasm of the remark. Alas, that there should be those who glory in that kind of thing—pinching, grinding, money-loving wretches! Some of these are even called Christians, but all the while “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
There are others who profess to be Christians who go about talking to young people and trying to indoctrinate them with false views. Sometimes they even cause the faith of the old to stagger—and they draw one and another aside to this novelty and to that, which is not according to the Scripture. I believe that such people are the worst “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” When the devil is in the pulpit, he is a devil! When we get bad doctrine proclaimed by ministers of Christ, themselves, then have we, indeed, “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” and there are, nowadays, plenty of them of whom I would speak, even weeping, as I say that, “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”  
Paul adds one other description of these “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” that is, worldliness—“who mind earthly things.” This is a very close home-thrust to many professing Christians. Do they ever help the Sunday school? Oh, no, no! Sunday school? They hope somebody or other attends to it, but it is no concern of theirs. Do they ever aid in a Mission? A Mission? Why, they do not get the shutters closed till so late at night that they cannot help in mission work—they have enough to do to look after themselves. But are they doing nothing at all for Christ? No, nothing! And for 20 years together, nothing. What are they minding, then? Well, I do not know. Only I am sure that they cannot be minding anything but “earthly things.” That is all. This is the catechism that they go through every day—“What shall we eat? What shall we drink? With what shall we be clothed?” That is all they live for.  
Now, do not be deceived! If this is true concerning you, you are no friend of Christ, for those who belong to Christ admit that they are not their own, but they are bought with a price and they have some higher and nobler objective than that which takes up the lives of worldlings. They are living for God and for eternity, for Christ and for the good of men! And their great wish is to lay themselves out for the Glory of God and the benefit of the human race. God grant that we may not be found among these characters, “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”!  
IV. For, next, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THESE PEOPLE?  
We are told that their “end is destruction.” There will be a total destruction of their profession. There will be a destruction of all their hopes. There will be a destruction of all their happiness. There will be destruction of themselves and they shall stand forever as destroyed and ruined things, ghastly exhibitions of what sin can do—and what must follow upon a false profession, or any other form of enmity to the Cross of Christ.  
V. Now, lastly, How SHOULD WE ACT IN THIS MATTER? If there are still such people as the Apostle describes, what have you and I to do concerning them?  
Well, first, some of us have to give frequent warning—“Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” O Friends, there are so many outside the professing Church who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” that it might break one’s heart to think of them! But those who are inside the Church, professors who never knew Christ, who have often come to the Communion Table, but have never had fellowship with Christ—who are quite satisfied with their outward religion while their hearts are rotten through and through—it is an awful and a dreadful thing that there should be such! But we are bound to keep on exhorting one another and warning one another because there are such “enemies of the Cross of Christ” even inside His nominal Church.  
And, let me add, if exhortations are frequently to be given, the warnings ought to be as frequently taken. How you and I ought often to pass the Apostolic question round, “Lord, is it I?” Suppose He stood on this platform and lifted up those pierced hands and said in majestic sorrow, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me”? Would not that question stir us all to anguish? Well, let it do so! See to it that you make sure work for eternity, my Brothers and Sisters, and while I talk to you—I am talking to myself as well—oh, see to it that you do not have a flimsy profession, a name to live when you are really dead! What is religion worth if it is not in the heart? It is like the pageantry which surrounds the grave—the pomp, the pall, the hearse—death decently covered up! May God, of His infinite mercy, save us from having a dead profession, for, as the Lord lives, He will not endure dead professors! “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” and He will one day say, “Bury My dead out of My sight.” These “enemies of the Cross of Christ” shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His power.  
But while we speak of these people, it becomes us to be very tender, for the Apostle says, “of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping.” Why weeping? Because it is an awful thing for men to hear the Divine and final sentence, “Depart, you cursed.” I would not like to think of anybody here who will have that for his portion at the Day of Judgment! And I would be a gross traitor to your souls if I did not also add that I cannot help fearing that this will be the lot of some of you! You have never come to Christ. Perhaps you have professed to do so, or, possibly, you have neither done it nor professed to do it, but you are openly and avowedly antagonistic to the Cross of Christ. May God’s Grace convert you! Otherwise we may well weep over you that you should die in your sins.  
But we have further tears because of the mischief that such sinners do. “Enemies of the Cross of Christ” do a world of damage to wife and children, neighbors and friends. “One sinner destroys much good.” One graceless life is a great robbery of the treasury of God. One life spent in distinct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus is a terrible thing. A Scotchman took some thistle seed to Australia that he might see a thistle grow on his farm. He only wanted one or two rare old Scotch thistles to make him think that he was at home. But now, thousands of acres are covered with this horrible weed which nobody can destroy and which has become the most gross nuisance of the region! One seed of sin may cover a continent with crime! God save us, then, from being numbered with “the enemies of the Cross of Christ”! Why should we not all come to the Cross now? The best homage we can pay to Jesus is to come and receive Him as our Savior. Let us do so! Let us sing this verse while we do it— *“Just as I am—without one plea  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that You bid me come to You,  
O Lamb of God, I come”*  
Let those who can truly sing it, do so, even if they never sang it before. God bless you all, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

Verse 1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. As much as to say, “If this were the last sentence that I should write to you, I would say, ‘Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.’ It is your privilege, it is your duty to rejoice in God—not in your health, your wealth, your children, your prosperity, but in the Lord.” There is the unchanging and unbounded source of joy. It will do you no harm to rejoice in the Lord! The more you rejoice in Him, the more spiritually-minded will you become. “Finally, my brethren.” That is, even to the end, not with you, the bitter end, but even to the end of life, rejoice in the Lord. Make this the finis of everything, the end of every day, the end of every year, the end of life. “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Blessed is that religion in which it is a duty to be happy!

1 *.*To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Saying the same thing over and over again is safe, for your minds do not catch the Truth of God at the first hearing, and your memories are slippery.

2 *.*Beware of dogs.—Men of a doggish, captious, selfish spirit. In Paul’s day, there were some who were ca1led Cynics, that is to say, dogs. “Beware of dogs.”

2 *.*Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. By which Paul meant those Jews who made a great point of circumcision. He calls them here “the cutters,” for they mangled and cut the Church of God in pieces. “Beware of the concision.”

3 *.*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. These are three marks of the true Israel of God. Have you all of them—worshipping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh?

4 *.*Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If anybody might, Paul might. If birth, if education, or if external religiousness could have saved anybody in the world, it would have saved Saul of Tarsus!

4, 5. If anyone thinks that he may have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day. The ritual was observed even to the hour in his case.

5 *.*Of the stock of Israel. Not an Edomite or a Samaritan, but, “of the stock of Israel” and of the very center of that stock.  
5*.*Of the tribe of Benjamin. Which remained with Judah, faithful, long after the ten tribes had gone aside.  
5*.*An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee. That is, one who observed all the minutiae and details of the Ceremonial Law and a good deal more—the traditions of the elders which hung like moss about the old stone of Jewish ceremonialism. Paul had observed all that.  
6*.*Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church! He was most zealous in the cause that he thought right. Bitterly, cruelly, even to the death, did he persecute the believers in Jesus.  
6*.*Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Paul had been kept from the vices into which many fell. In his young days, he had been pure. And all his days, he had been upright and sincere. As far as he knew, to the best of his light, he had observed the Law of God. In another place, he calls himself the chief of sinners. And so he was because he persecuted the Church of God. But, in another sense, I may say of him that there is no man who stood so good a chance of being justified by works as Paul did, if there could have been any justification in that way.  
7*.*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. His faith in Jesus reversed all his former estimates, so that his gains he counted to be losses. He thought it so much the worse, concerning zeal, to have persecuted the Church, and so much to his injury to have imagined that he was blameless in the Presence of God.  
8*.*Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.—Offal, refuse, garbage—  
8*.*That I may win Christ. He had every opportunity of advancement. He was a fine scholar and might have reached the highest degree in connection with the Sanhedrim and the synagogue, but he thought nothing of all that—he threw it all away as worthless and declared that this was his ambition—“That I may win Christ.”  
9*.*And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. It must be more glorious to be justified by God than by ourselves. It must be more safe to wear the righteousness of Christ than to wear our own. Nothing can so dignify our manhood as to have Christ, Himself, to be “the Lord our Righteousness.” This Paul chose in preference to everything else.  
10, 11. That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. See to what Paul is looking forward—resurrection—and therefore he lets this life go as of secondary importance. He is willing to suffer as Christ suffered and to die as Christ died. You and I may never be called to make that great sacrifice, but if we are true followers of Christ, we shall be prepared for it. If ever it should happen that Christ and our life shall be put in competition, we must not deliberate for a moment, for Christ is all, and we must be ready to give up all for Christ.  
12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. He does not say that anybody has been perfect, but he does say that he was not so himself, and I should think that any man who believed himself to be better than Paul would thereby prove at once that he was not perfect, for he must be sadly lacking in humility.  
12. But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. “All that Christ meant me to be, I want to be. All that Christ meant to give me, I want to have. All that He meant me to do, I want to do, to apprehend, to lay hold of that for which I am laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”  
13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. That is Paul’s judgment concerning himself—he has not yet attained to the full all that the religion of Christ can give him.  
13, 14. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Always making progress—throwing himself into it, having the reward before him, the prize of perfection in Christ—and running towards it with all his might.  
15. Let us, therefore, as many as are mature. Or, “would be perfect.”  
15. Be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. I admire that sentence. If any Brother has not reached a full knowledge of the Truth of God, let us not condemn him, or cast him out of our company, but say to him, “God shall reveal even this unto you.”  
16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. There are some points upon which we are all agreed. There is some standing ground where the babe in Grace may meet with the man in Christ Jesus. Well, as far as we see eye to eye, let us co-operate with one another, let us have our hearts knit together in a holy unanimity. “Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” There are some people who are always looking out for points of difference—their motto seems to be, “If we differ in anything, let us split away from one another.” Their great idea is that by dividing we shall conquer! The fact is that by separating ourselves from one another, we shall miss all hope of strength and play into the hands of the adversaries.  
17. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. For the true servant of Christ teaches by his life as much as by his words.  
18-20. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things). For our conversation. Or, citizenship—  
20, 21. Is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body. Vile so far that it has been defiled by sin. Vile in comparison with that body which shall be—“Who shall change our vile body,” the body of our humiliation.  
21*.*That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

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÷Php 3.20

CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN  
NO. 476

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”***Php 3:20***.**

THERE can be no comparison between a soaring seraph and a crawling worm. Christian men ought so to live that it were idle to speak of a comparison between them and the men of the world. It should not be a comparison but a contrast. No scale of degrees should be possible. The Believer should be a direct and manifest contradiction to the unregenerate. The life of a saint should be altogether above and out of the same list as the life of a sinner.

We should compel our critics not to confess that moralists are good, and Christians a little better. But while the world is darkness, we should manifestly be light. And while the world lies in the Wicked One, we should most evidently be of God, and overcome the temptations of that Wicked One. Wide as the poles asunder are life and death, light and darkness, health and disease, purity and sin, spiritual and carnal, Divine and sensual. If we were what we profess to be, we should be as distinct a people in the midst of this world, as a white race in a community of Ethiopians. There should be no more difficulty in detecting the Christian from the worldling than in discovering a sheep from a goat, or a lamb from a wolf.

Alas, the Church is so much adulterated, that we have to abate our glorying, and cannot exalt her character as we would. “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!” O for the time when “our conversation shall be in Heaven,” and the ignoble life of the man, whose god is his belly, and whose end is destruction, shall be rebuked by our unworldly, unselfish character. There should be as much difference between the worldling and the Christian as between Hell and Heaven, between destruction and eternal life.

As we hope at last that there shall be a great gulf separating us from the doom of the impenitent, there should be here a deep and wide gulf between us and the ungodly. The purity of our character should be such that men must take knowledge of us that we are of another and superior race. God grant us more and more to be most clearly a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we may show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Brethren, tonight I exhort you to holiness, not by the precepts of the Law—not by the thunder from Sinai—not by the perils or punishments which might fall upon you if you are unholy. But by the privileges to which you have been admitted. Gracious souls should only be urged by arguments from Divine Grace. Whips are for the backs of fools, and not

for heirs of Heaven. By the honorable citizenship which has been bestowed upon you, I shall beseech you to let your conversation be in Heaven. And I shall urge that most prevailing argument, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, and therefore we should be as men that watch for our Lord, diligently doing service unto Him, that when He comes He may say unto us, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” I know that the Grace which is in you will freely answer to such a plea.

Our text, I think, might be best translated thus—“Our citizenship is in Heaven.” The French translation renders it, “As for us, our burgessship is in the heavens.” Doddridge paraphrases it, “But we converse as citizens of Heaven, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth.”

I. The first idea which is suggested by the verse under consideration is this—if our citizenship is in Heaven, then WE ARE ALIENS HERE. We are strangers and foreigners, pilgrims and sojourners in the earth, as all our fathers were. In the words of Sacred Writ, “Here we have no continuing city,” but, “we desire a better country, that is an heavenly.” Let us illustrate our position. A certain young man is sent out by his father to trade on behalf of the family—he is sent to America, and he is just now living in New York.

A very fortunate thing it is for him that his citizenship is in England. Though he lives in America and trades there, yet he is an alien and does not belong to that afflicted nation. For he retains his citizenship with us on this side of the Atlantic. Yet there is a line of conduct which is due from him to the country which affords him shelter, and he must see to it that he does not fail to render it. Since we are aliens, we must remember to behave ourselves as aliens should, and by no means come short in our duty. We are affected by the position of our temporary country.

A person trading in New York or Boston, though a freeman of the city of London, will find himself very much affected by the trade of the United States—when the merchants of his city suffer, he will find himself suffering with them, the fluctuations of their money market will affect his undertakings and the stagnation of commerce will slacken his progress. But if prosperity should happily return, he will find that when the coffers of their merchants are getting full, his will be the better. And the happy development of trade will give buoyancy to his own ventures.

He is not of the nation, and yet every trembling of the scale will affect him. He will prosper as that nation prospers, and he will suffer as that nation suffers. That is to say, not as a citizen, but as a trader. And so we, in this country, find that though we are strangers and foreigners on earth, yet we share all the inconveniences of the flesh. No exemption is granted to us from the common lot of manhood. We are born to trouble, even as others, and have tribulation like the rest. When famine comes we hunger. And when war rages we are in danger.

We are exposed to the same climate, bearing the same burning heat, or the same freezing cold. We know the whole train of ills, even as the citizens of earth know them. When God in mercy scatters liberally with both His hands the bounties of His Providence, we take our share. Though we are aliens, yet we live upon the good of the land, and share the tender mercies of the God of Providence. Therefore we have to take some interest in it. And the good man, though he is a foreigner, will not live even a week in this foreign land without seeking to do good among the neighbors with whom he dwells.

The good Samaritan sought not only the good of the Samaritan nation but of the Jews. Though there was no sort of kinship among them (for the Samaritans were not, as we have often heard erroneously said, first cousins or relations to the Jews. Not a drop of Jewish blood ever ran in the Samaritans’ veins. They were strangers brought from Assyria. They had no relation to Abraham whatever), yet the good Samaritan, finding himself traveling between Jericho and Jerusalem, did good to the Jew, since he was in Judea. The Lord charged His people by His servant Jeremiah, “Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall you have peace.”

Since we are here, we must seek the good of this world. “To do good, and to communicate, forget not.” “Love you your enemies and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

We must do our utmost while we are here to bring men to Christ, to win them from their evil ways, to bring them to eternal life, and to make them, with us, citizens of another, and a better land. For, to tell the truth, we are here as recruiting sergeants for Heaven. Here to give men the enlisting money, to bind upon them the blood red colors of the Savior’s service, to win them to King Jesus, that, by-and-by, they may share His victories after having fought His battles.

Seeking the good of the country as aliens, we must also remember that it behooves aliens to keep themselves very quiet. What business have foreigners to plot against the government, or to intermeddle with the politics of a country in which they have no citizenship? An Englishman in New York had best be without a tongue just now. If he should criticize the courage of the generals, the accuracy of their dispatches, or the genius of the President, he might meet with rather rough usage. He will be injudicious, indeed, if he cannot leave America to the Americans.

So, in this land of ours, where you and I are strangers, we must be orderly sojourners, submitting ourselves constantly to those that are in authority, leading orderly and peaceable lives, and, according to the command of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle, “honoring all men, fearing God, honoring the King.” “Submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” I cannot say that I delight in political Christians. I fear that party strife is a serious trial to Believers, and I cannot reconcile our heavenly citizenship with the schemes of the hustling and the riot of the polling-booth.

You must follow your own judgment here, but for my part, I am a foreigner even in England, and as such I mean to act. We are simply passing through this earth and should bless it in our transit but never yoke ourselves to its affairs. An Englishman may happen to be in Spain—he wishes a thousand things were different from what they are, but he does

not trouble himself much about them—says he,” If I were a Spaniard I would see what I could do to alter this government but, being an Englishman, let the Spaniards see to their own matters. I shall be back in my own country by-and-by, and the sooner the better.”

So with Christians here. They are content very much to let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Their politics concern their own country, they do not care much about any other. As men they love liberty and are not willing to lose it even in the lower sense. But, spiritually, their politics are spiritual, and as citizens they look to the interest of that Divine republic to which they belong. They wait for the time when, having patiently borne with the laws of the land of their banishment, they shall come under the more beneficent sway of Him who reigns in Glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords. If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, and serve your day and generation still, but build not your soul’s dwelling place here, for all this earth must be destroyed at the coming of the fiery day.

Again, let us remember that as aliens we have privileges as well as duties. The princes of evil cannot draft us into their regiments. We cannot be compelled to do Satan’s work. The king of this world may make his vassals serve him, but he cannot raise a conscription upon aliens. He may order out his troops to this villainy, or to that dastardly service, but the child of God claims an immunity from all the commands of Satan. Let evil maxims bind the men that own their sway—we are free and own not the prince of the power of the air. I know that men of this world say we must keep up appearances. We must be respectable. We must do as others do. We must swim with the tide. We must move with the crowd.

But not so the upright Believer—“No,” says he, “Do not expect me to fall in with your ways and customs. I am in Rome, but I shall not do as Rome does. I will let you see that I am an alien, and that I have rights as an alien, even here in this foreign land. I am not to be bound to fight your battles, nor march at the sound of your drums.” Brethren, we are soldiers of Christ. We are enlisted in His army. And as aliens here, we are not to be constrained into the army of evil. Let lords and lands have what masters they will, let us be free, for Christ is our Master still. The seventy thousand whom God has reserved, will not bow the knee to Baal. Be it known unto you, O world, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the image which you have set up. Servants of God we are, and we will not be in bondage unto men.

As we are free from the conscription of the State, we must remember, also, that we are not eligible to its honors. I know you will say that is not a privilege. But it is a great benefit if looked at aright. An Englishman in New York is not eligible for the very prickly throne of the President. I suppose he could not well be made a governor of Massachusetts or any other State, and, indeed, he may be well content to renounce the difficulties and the honor, too. So also, the Christian man here is not eligible to this world’s honors. It is a very ill omen to hear the world clap its hands and say, “Well done,” to the Christian man. He may begin to look to his standing and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong when the unrighteous give him their approbation.

“What, did I do wrong,” said Socrates, “that yonder villain praised me just now?” And so may the Christian say, “What, have I done wrong, that So-and-So spoke well of me, for if I had done right, he would not? He has not the sense to praise goodness—he could only have applauded that which suited his own taste. Christian Brothers and Sisters, you must never covet the world’s esteem. The love of this world is not in keeping with the love of God. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Treat its smiles as you treat its threats, with quiet contempt. Be willing rather to be sneered at than to be approved, counting the Cross of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

O harlot world, it were a sad dishonor to be your favorite! Tire your head and paint your face, you Jezebel, but you are no friend of ours, nor will we desire your hollow love. The men of this world were mad to raise us to their seats of honor, for we are aliens and citizens of another country. When the Pope sent a noted Protestant statesman a present of some silver goblets, he returned them with this answer—“The citizens of Zurich compel their judges to swear twice in the year that they will receive no presents from foreign princes, therefore take them back.” More than twice in the year should the Christian resolve that he will not accept the smiles of this world and will do no homage to its glory.

“We fear the Greeks even when they bear gifts.” Like the Trojans of old, we may be beguiled with presents even if unconquered in arms. Forswear then, the grandeur and honor of this fleeting age. Say in life, what a proud cardinal said in death, “Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.” Pass through Vanity Fair without trading in its vanities, crying, in answer to their “What will you buy?”—“We buy the Truth of God.” Take up the pilgrim’s song and sing it always—

*“The things eternal I pursue,  
And happiness beyond the view  
Of those who basely pant  
For things by nature felt and seen.  
Their honors, wealth and pleasures mean, I neither have nor want.  
Nothing on earth I call my own—  
A stranger to the world unknown,  
I all their goods despise.  
I trample on their whole delight,  
And seek a country out of sight—  
A country in the skies.”*

Furthermore, as aliens, it is not for us to hoard up this world’s treasures. Gentlemen, you who know the exchange of New York, would you hoard up any extensive amount of Mr. Chase’s green-backed notes? I think not. Those stamps which officiate in the States in lieu of copper coinage I should hardly desire to accumulate. Perhaps the fire might consume them, or if not, the gradual process of wear and tear which they are sure to undergo might leave me penniless before long. “No, Sir,” says the British trader, “I am an alien. I cannot very well accept payment in these bits of paper. They are very well for you, perhaps.  
“They will pass current in your state but my riches must be riches in

England, for I am going there to live directly. I must have solid gold, old English sovereigns, nothing else but these can make me rich.” Brethren, so it is with us. If we are aliens, the treasures of this world are like those bits of paper, of little value in our esteem. And we should lay up our treasure in Heaven, “where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” The money of this world is not current in Paradise. And when we reach its blissful shore, if regret can be known, we shall wish that we had laid up more treasure in the land of our fatherhood, in the dear fatherland beyond the skies.

Transport your jewels to a safer country than this world. Be rich toward God rather than before men. A certain minister collecting for a Chapel, called upon a rich merchant, who generously gave him fifty pounds. As the good man was going out with sparkling eye at the liberality of the merchant, the tradesman opened a , and he said, “Stop a minute, I find by this letter, I have lost this morning a ship worth six thousand pounds.” The poor minister trembled in his shoes, for he thought the next word would be, “Let me have the fifty pound check back.”

Instead of it, it was “Let me have the check back a moment,” and then taking out his pen he wrote him a check for five hundred pounds. “As my money is going so fast, it is well,” said he, “to make sure of some of it, so I will put some of it in God’s bank.” The man, you doubt not, went his way astonished at such a way of dealing as this, but indeed that is just what a man should do, who feels he is an alien here and his treasure is beyond the sky—

*“There is my house and portion fair;  
My treasure and my heart are there,  
And my abiding home—  
For me my elder Brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come.”*

II. It is our comfort now to remind you that although aliens on earth, WE ARE CITIZENS IN HEAVEN.  
What is meant by our being citizens in Heaven? Why, first that we are under Heaven’s government. Christ, the king of Heaven, reigns in our hearts. The laws of Glory are the laws of our consciences. Our daily prayer is, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” The proclamations issued from the Throne of Glory are freely received by us. The decrees of the Great King we cheerfully obey. We are not without Law to Christ. The Spirit of God rules in our mortal bodies. Divine Grace reigns through righteousness, and we wear the easy yoke of Jesus. O that He would sit as king in our hearts, like Solomon upon his throne of gold. Yours are we, Jesus, and all that we have, You rule without a rival.  
As citizens of the New Jerusalem, we share Heaven’s honors. The glory which belongs to beatified saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, already princes of the blood imperial. Already we wear the spotless robe of Jesus’ righteousness. Already we have angels for our servitors, saints for our companions, Christ for our Brother, God for our Father, and a crown of immortality for our reward. We share the honors of citizenship, for we have come to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is.”  
As citizens, we have common rights in all the property of Heaven. Those wide extensive plains we sung of just now are ours. Ours the yonder harps of gold and crowns of glory. Ours the gates of pearl and walls of chrysolite. Ours the azure light of the city that needs no candle nor light of the sun. Ours the river of the Water of Life, and the twelve manner of fruits which grow on the trees planted at the side thereof. There is nothing in Heaven that belongs not to us, for our citizenship is there. “Things present, or things to come, all are ours. And we are Christ’s. And Christ is God’s.”  
And as we are thus under Heaven’s government, and share its honors and partake of its possessions, so we today enjoy its delights. Do they rejoice over sinners that are born to God—prodigals that have returned? So do we. Do they chant the glories of triumphant Grace? We do the same. Do they cast their crowns at Jesus’ feet? Such honors as we have, we cast there, too. Do they rejoice in Him? So, also, do we. Do they triumph, waiting for His second advent? By faith we triumph in the same. Are they tonight singing, “Worthy the Lamb”? We also have sung the same tune, not to such glorious notes as theirs, but with as sincere hearts. With minstrelsy not quite so splendid, but we hope as sincere, for the Spirit gave us the music which we have, and the Spirit gave them the thunders of their acclamations before the Throne. “Our citizenship is in Heaven.”  
Brethren, we rejoice to know, also, that as the result of our being citizens, or rather I ought to have said as the cause of it, our names are written in the roll of Heaven’s freemen. When, at last, the list shall be read, our names, by His Grace, shall be read, too. For where Paul and Peter, where David and Jonathan, where Abraham and Jacob shall be found, we shall be found, too. Numbered with them we were in the Divine purpose, reckoned with them we were in the purchase on the Cross, and with them shall we sit down forever at the tables of the blessed. The small and the great are fellow citizens and of the same household.  
The babes and the perfect men are recorded in the same great registry, and neither death nor Hell can erase a single name. Our citizenship, then, is in Heaven. We have not time to expand that thought. John Calvin says of this text, “It is a most abundant source of many exhortations, which it were easy for anyone to elicit from it.” We are not all Calvin. But even to our smaller capacities, the subject appears to be one not readily exhausted, but rich with unfathomable joy.  
III. We must now come to our third point, which is OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN. Our walk and acts are such as are consistent with our dignity as citizens of Heaven. Among the old Romans, when a dastardly action was proposed it was thought a sufficient refusal to answer, “Romanus sum—I am a Roman.”  
Surely it should be a strong incentive to every good thing if we can claim to be freemen of the Eternal City. Let our lives be conformed to the glory of our citizenship. In Heaven they are holy, so must we be—so are we if our citizenship is not a mere presence. They are happy, so must we be rejoicing in the Lord always. In Heaven they are obedient—so must we be, following the faintest monitions of the Divine will. In Heaven they are active, so should we be, both day and night praising and serving God. In Heaven they are peaceful, so should we find a rest in Christ, and be at peace even now.  
In Heaven they rejoice to behold the face of Christ, so should we be always meditating upon Him, studying His beauties, and desiring to look into the Truths of God which He has taught. In Heaven they are full of love, so should we love one another as Brethren. In Heaven they have sweet communion, one with another. So should we, who though many, are one body, be every one members one of the other. Before the Throne they are free from envy and strife, ill-will, jealousy, emulation, falsehood, anger. So should we be—we should, in fact, seek while we are here, to keep up the manners and customs of the good old fatherland, so that, as in Paris, the Parisian soon says, “There goes John Bull,” so they should be able to say in this land, “there goes a heavenly citizen, one who is with us and among us but is not of us.”  
Our very speech should be such that our citizenship should be detected. We should not be able to live long in a house without men finding out what we are. A friend of mine once went across to America, and landing, I think, at Boston, he knew nobody. But hearing a man say, when somebody had dropped a cask on the quay, “Look out there, or else you will make a Coggeshall job of it,” he said, “You are an Essex man I know, for that is a proverb never used anywhere but in Essex—give me your hand.” And they were friends at once.  
So there should be a ring of true metal about our speech and conversation, so that when a Brother meets us, he can say, “You are a Christian, I know, for none but Christians speak like that, or act like that.” “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth, for your speech betrays you.” Our holiness should act as a sort of beacon by which we know how to give the grip to the stranger, who is not a real stranger, but a fellow citizen with us, and of the household of faith.  
Oh, dear Friends, wherever we wander, we should never forget our beloved land. In Australia, on the other side the world, or in the Cape of Good Hope, or wherever else we may be exiled, surely every Englishman’s eye must turn to this fair island—and with all her faults, we must love her still. And surely let us be where we may, our eyes must turn to Heaven, the happy land unstained by shadow of fault. We love her still and love her more and more, praying for the time when our banishment shall expire, and we shall enter into our Fatherland to dwell there forever and ever.  
Shenstone says, “The proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign land.” Sure am I that we who cry, “Woe is me, for I dwell in Mesech and sojourn in the tents of Cedar!” are sure to add, “O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.”  
IV. The text says, “Our conversation is in Heaven,” and I think we may also read it, as though it said, “OUR COMMERCE IS IN HEAVEN.” We are trading on earth, but still the bulk of our trade is with Heaven. We trade for trinkets in this land but our gold and silver are in Heaven.  
We commune with Heaven and how? Our trade is with Heaven by meditation, we often think of God, our Father, and Christ, our Brother. And, by the Spirit, the Comforter, we are brought in contemplative delight to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. Brethren, do not our thoughts sometimes burn within us, when we trade with that blessed land? When I have sent the ships of understanding and consideration to that land of Ophir, which is full of gold, and they have come back again laden with all manner of precious things, my thoughts have been enriched—my soul has longed to journey to that good land.  
Black and stormy are you, O sea of death, but I would cross you to reach that land of Havilah, which has dust of gold. I know that he who is a Christian will never have his mind long off that better land. And do you know we sometimes trade with Heaven in our hymns? They tell us of the Swiss soldiery in foreign countries, that there is a song which the band is forbidden to play, because it reminds them of the cowbells of their native hills. If the men hear it, they are sure to desert, for that dear old song revives before their eyes the wooden chalets and the cows and the pastures of the glorious Alps and they long to be away.  
There are some of our hymns that make us homesick, until we are hardly content to stop, and therefore, well did our poet end his song—

*“Filled with delight, my raptured soul,  
Can here no longer stay.  
Though Jordan’s waves around us roll,  
Fearless we launch away.”*

I feel the spirit of Wesley, when he said—  
*“O that we now might see our Guide!  
O that the word were given!  
Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,  
And land us all in Heaven.”*

In times of high, hallowed, heavenly harmony of praise, the songs of angels seem to come astray and find their way down to us. And then our songs return with them, hand in hand, and go back to God’s Throne, through Jesus Christ.

We trade with Heaven, I hope, too, not only thus by meditation and by thought, and by song, but by hopes and by loves. Our love is toward that land. How heartily the Germans sing of the dear old fatherland. But they cannot, with all their Germanic patriotism, they cannot beat the genial glow of the Briton’s heart, when he thinks of his fatherland, too. The Scotchman, too, wherever he may be, remembers the land of “brown heath and shaggy wood.” And the Irishman, too, let him be where he will, still thinks the “Emerald Isle” the first gem of the sea.

It is right that the patriot should love his country. Does not our love fervently flame towards Heaven? We think we cannot speak well enough of it, and, indeed, here we are correct, for no exaggeration is possible. When we talk of that land of Eschol, our mouths are watering to taste its clusters. Already, like David, we thirst to drink of the well that is within the gate. And we hunger after the good corn of the land. Our ears are wanting to have done with the discords of earth, that they may open to the harmonies of Heaven. And our tongues are longing to sing the melodious sonnets, sung by flaming ones above. Yes, we do love Heaven, and thus it is that we prove that our commerce is with that better land.

Brethren, just as people in a foreign land that love their country always are glad to have plenty of letters from the country, I hope we have much communication with the old fatherland. We send our prayers there as letters to our Father, and we get His letters back in this blessed volume of His Word. You go into an Australian settler’s hut, and you find a newspaper. Where from, Sir? A gazette from the south of France, a journal from America? Oh no, it is a newspaper from England, addressed to him in his old mother’s handwriting, bearing the postage stamp with the good Queen’s face in the comer.

And he likes it, though it is only a newspaper from some little pottering country town, with no news in it. Yet he likes it better, perhaps, than the “Times” itself, because it talks to him about the village where he lived, and consequently touches a special string in the harp of his soul. So must it be with Heaven. This book, the Bible, is the newspaper of Heaven, and therefore we must love it. The sermons which are preached are good news from a far country. The hymns we sing are notes by which we tell our Father of our welfare here, and by which He whispers into our soul His continued love to us. All these are, and must be pleasant to us, for our commerce is with Heaven.

I hope, too, we are sending a good deal home. I like to see our young fellows, when they go out to live in the bush, remember their mother at home. They say, “She had a hard struggle to bring us up when our father died, and she scraped her little together to help us to emigrate.” John and Tom mutually agree, “the first gold we get at the diggings we will send home to mother.” And it goes home. Well, I hope you are sending a great many things home.

Dear Friends, I hope as we are aliens here, we are not laying up our treasure here, where we may lose it, but packing it off as quickly as we can to our own country. There are many ways of doing it. God has many banks. And they are all safe ones. We have but to serve His Church, or serve the souls which Christ has bought with His blood, or help His poor, clothe His naked, and feed His hungry—and we send our treasures beyond sea in a safe ship. And so we keep up our commerce with the skies.

V. Time has gone. Those clocks will strike when yours ought not. There is a great reason why we should live like aliens and foreigners here, and that is because CHRIST IS COMING SOON. The early Church never forgot this. Did they not pant and thirst after the return of their ascended Lord? Like the twelve tribes, day and night they instantly watched for Messiah.

But the Church has grown weary of this hope. There have been so many false prophets who tell us that Christ is coming, that the Church thinks He never will come. And she begins to deny, or to keep in the background the blessed doctrine of the second advent of her Lord from Heaven. I do not think the fact that there have been many false prophets should make us doubt our Lord’s true word. Perhaps the very frequency of these mistakes may show that there is truth at the bottom.

You have a friend who is ill, and the doctor says he cannot last long. He must die. You have called a great many times expecting to hear of his departure but he is still alive. Now the frequent errors of the physicians do not prove that your friend will not die one of these days, and that speedily, too. And so, though the false prophets have said, “Lo, here,” and “Lo, there,” and yet Christ has not come—that does not prove that His glorious appearing will never arrive.

You know I am no prophet. I do not know anything about 1866. I find quite enough to do to attend to 1862. I do not understand the visions of Daniel or Ezekiel. I find I have enough to do to teach the simple word such as I find in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Epistles of Paul. I do not find many souls have been converted to God by exquisite dissertations about the battle of Armageddon, and all those other fine things. I have no doubt prophesying is very profitable, but I rather question whether they are so profitable to the hearers, as they may be to the preachers and publishers.

I conceive that among religious people of a certain sort, the abortive explanations of prophecy issued by certain doctors gratify a craving which irreligious people find its food in novels and romances. People have a panting to know the future. And certain divines pander to this depraved taste, by prophesying for them and letting them know what is coming byand-by. I do not know the future and I shall not pretend to know. But I do preach this, because I know it, that Christ will come, for He says so in a hundred passages.

The Epistles of Paul are full of the advent, and Peter’s, too, and John’s letters are crowded with it. The best of saints have always lived on the hope of the advent. There was Enoch—he prophesied of the coming of the Son of Man. So there was another Enoch who was always talking of the coming, and saying, “Come quickly.” I will not divide the house tonight by discussing whether the advent will be premillennial or postmillennial, or anything of that. It is enough for me that He will come, and, “in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come.”

Tonight He may appear, while here we stand. Just when we think that he will not come, the thief shall break open the house. We ought, therefore, to be always watching. Since the gold and silver that you have will be worthless at His advent. Since your lands and estates will melt to smoke when He appears. Since, then the righteous shall be rich and the godly shall be great, lay not up your treasure here, for it may at any time vanish, at any time disappear, for Christ at any moment may come.

I think the Church would do well to be always living as if Christ might come today. I feel persuaded she is doing ill if she works as if He would not come till 1866, because He may come before, and He may come this moment. Let her always be living as if He would come now, still acting in her Master’s sight, and watching unto prayer. Never mind about the last vials—fill your own vial with sweet odors and offer it before the Lord. Think what you like about Armageddon. But forgot not to fight the good fight of faith. Guess not at the precise era for the destruction of Antichrist, go and destroy it yourself, fighting against it every day. But be looking forward and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man. And let this be at once your comfort and excitement to diligence—that the Savior will

soon come from Heaven.

Now, I think you foreigners here present—and I hope there are a great many true aliens here—ought to feel like a poor stranded mariner on a desolate island. You have saved a few things from the wreck and built yourself an old log hut. You have a few comforts round about you, but for all that you long for home. Every morning you look out to sea and wonder when you shall see a sail. Many times while examining the wide ocean to look for a ship, you have clapped your hands, and then wept to find you were mistaken. Every night you light a fire that there may be a blaze, so that if a ship should go by, they may send relief to you.

Ah, that is just the way we ought to live. We have heard of one saint who used to open his window every morning when he woke, to see if Christ had come. It might be fanaticism, but better to be enthusiastic than to mind earthly things. I would have us look out each night, and light the fire of prayer, that it may be burning in case the ships of Heaven should go by—that blessings may come to us poor aliens and foreigners who need them so much. Let us wait patiently till the Lord’s convoy shall take us on board, that we may be carried into the glories and splendor of the reign of Christ.

Let us always hold the log hut with a loose hand and long for the time when we shall get to that better land where our possessions are, where our Father lives, where our treasures lie, where all our Brethren dwell. Well said our poet —

*“Blest scenes,  
Through rude and stormy seas  
I onward press to You.”*

My Beloved Friends, I can assure you it is always one of the sweetest thoughts I ever know, that I shall meet with you in Heaven. There are so many of you members of this Church, that I can hardly get to shake hands with you once in a year. But I shall have plenty of time, then, in Heaven. You will know your pastor in Heaven better than you do now. He loves you now, and you love him. We shall then have more time to recount our experience of Divine Grace, and praise God together, and sing together, and rejoice together concerning Him by whom we were helped to plant and sow, and through whom all the increase came—

*“I hope when days and years are past,  
We all shall meet in Heaven,  
We all shall meet in Heaven at last,  
We all shall meet in Heaven.”*

But we shall not all meet in Glory. Not all, unless you repent. Some of you will certainly perish, unless you believe in Christ. But why must we be divided? Oh, why not all in Heaven? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved but he that believes not shall be damned.” Trust Christ, Sinner, and Heaven is yours and mine, and we are safe, by His Grace, forever. Amen.

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THE POWER OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED BY THE RESURRECTION  
NO. 973

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 29, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where we also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,”***Php 3:20-21***.**

I should mislead you if I called these verses my text, for I intend only to lay stress upon the closing expression, and I read the two verses because they are necessary for its explanation. It would require several discourses to expound the whole of so rich a passage as this.

Beloved, how intimately is the whole of our life interwoven with the life of Christ! His first coming has been to us salvation, and we are delivered from the wrath of God through Him. We live still because He lives, and never is our life more joyous than when we look most steadily to Him. The completion of our salvation in the deliverance of our body from the bondage of corruption, in the raising of our dust to a glorious immortality— that also is wrapped up with the Personal Resurrection and quickening power of the Lord Jesus Christ. As His first advent has been our salvation from sin, so His second advent shall be our salvation from the grave.

He is in Heaven, but, as the Apostle says, “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” We have nothing, we are nothing, apart from Him. The past, the present, and the future are only bright as He shines upon them. Every consolation, every hope, every enjoyment we possess, we have received and still retain because of our connection with Jesus Christ our Lord. Apart from Him we are naked, and poor, and miserable.

I desire to impress upon your minds, and especially upon my own, the need of our abiding in Him. As zealous laborers for the glory of God I am peculiarly anxious that you may maintain daily communion with Jesus, for as it is with our Covenant blessings, so is it with our work of faith and labor of love—everything depends upon Him. All our fruit is found in Jesus. Remember His own words, “Without Me you can do nothing.” Our power to work comes wholly from His power. If we work effectually, it must always be according to the effectual working of His power in us and through us.

Brethren, I pray that our eyes may be steadfastly turned to our Master at this season when our special services are about to commence. Confessing our dependence upon Him, and resorting to Him in renewed confidence, we shall proceed to our labor with redoubled strength. May we remember where our great strength lies, and look to Him and Him alone,

away from our own weakness and our own strength, too—finding all in Him in our work for others as we have found all in Him in the matter of the salvation of our own souls. When the multitudes were fed, the disciples distributed the bread, but the central source of that Divine commissariat was the Master’s own hand.

He blessed, He broke, He gave to the disciples, and then the disciples to the multitude. Significant, also, was one of the last scenes of our Lord’s conversation with His disciples before He was taken up. They had been fishing all night, but they had taken nothing. It was only when He came that they cast the net on the right side of the ship, and then the net was filled with a great multitude of fishes. Ever must it be so—where He is, souls are taken by the fishers of men, but nowhere else. Not the preaching of His servants alone, not the Gospel of itself alone—but His Presence with His servants is the secret of success.

“The Lord working with them.” His cooperating Presence in the Gospel—this is it which makes it “the power of God unto salvation.” Lift up your eyes then, my Brethren, confederate with us for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom, to the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation. It is through Him and Him alone by whom all things shall be worked to the honor of God, but without whom the most ardent desires, and the most energetic efforts must most certainly fail. I have selected this text with no less a design than this—that every eye may, by it, be turned to the Omnipotent Savior before we enter upon the hallowed engagements which await us.

In the text notice, first of all, the marvel to be worked by our Lord at His coming. And then gather from it, in the second place, helps to the consideration of the power which is now at this time proceeding from Him and treasured in Him. And then, thirdly, contemplate the work which we desire to see accomplished, and which we believe will be accomplished on the ground of the power resident in our Lord.

I. First, we have to ask you to CONSIDER, BELIEVINGLY, THE MARVEL WHICH IS TO BE WORKED BY OUR LORD AT HIS COMING. When He shall come a second time He will change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body. What a marvelous change! How great the transformation! How high the ascent! Our body in its present state is called in our translation a “vile body.” But if we translate the Greek more literally it is much more expressive, for there we find this corporeal frame called “the body of our humiliation.” Not “this humble body”—that is hardly the meaning—but the body in which our humiliation is manifested and enclosed.

This body of our humiliation our Lord will transform until it is like unto His own. Here read not alone “His glorious body,” for that is not the most literal translation, but “the body of His glory.” The body in which He enjoys and reveals His glory. Our Savior had a body here in humiliation. That body was like ours in all respects except that it could see no corruption, for it was undefiled with sin. That body in which our Lord wept, and sweat great drops of blood, and yielded up His spirit, was the body of His humiliation.  
He rose again from the dead, and He rose in the same body which ascended up into Heaven, but He concealed its glory to a very great extent, else He had been too bright to be seen of mortal eyes. Only when He passed the cloud, and was received out of sight, did the full glory of His body shine forth to ravish the eyes of angels and of glorified spirits. Then was it that His countenance became as the sun shining in its strength.

Now, Beloved, whatever the body of Jesus may be in His Glory, our present body which is now in its humiliation is to be conformed unto it— Jesus is the standard of man in Glory. “We shall be like He is, for we shall see him as He is.” Here we dwell in this body of our humiliation, but it shall undergo a change—“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Then shall we come into our glory, and our body being made suitable to the Glory state, shall be fitly called the body of Glory.

We need not curiously pry into the details of the change, nor attempt to define all the differences between the two estates of our body. For “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” and we may be content to leave much to be made known to us hereafter. Yet though we see through a glass darkly, we nevertheless do see something, and would not shut our eyes to that little. We know not yet as we are known, but we do know in part, and that part knowledge is precious. The gates have been ajar at times, and men have looked awhile, and beheld and wondered.

Three times, at least, human eyes have seen something of the body of Glory. The face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, shone so that those who gathered around him could not look upon it, and he had to cover it with a veil. In that lustrous face of the man who had been forty days in high communion with God, you behold some gleams of the brightness of glorified manhood.

Our Lord made a yet clearer manifestation of the glorious body when He was transfigured in the presence of the three disciples. When His garments became bright and glistering, whiter than any fuller could make them, and He Himself was all aglow with Glory, His disciples saw and marveled. The face of Stephen is a third window, as it were, through which we may look at the Glory to be revealed, for even his enemies, as they gazed upon the martyr in his confession of Christ, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those three transient gleams of the morning light may serve as tokens to us to help us to form some faint idea of what the body of the Glory of Christ and the body of our own glory will be.

Turning to that marvelous passage in Corinthians, wherein the veil seems to be more uplifted than it ever had been before or since, we learn a few particulars worthy to be rehearsed. The body while here below is corruptible, subject to decay. It gradually becomes weak through old age and at last it yields to the blows of death, falls into the ground, and becomes the food of worms.

But the new body shall be incorruptible! It shall not be subject to any process of disease, decay, or decline. It shall never, through the lapse of ages, yield to the force of death. It shall be the immortal companion for the immortal spirit. There are no graves in Heaven, no knell ever saddened the New Jerusalem. The body here is weak—the Apostle says, “it is sown in weakness.” It is subject to all sorts of infirmities in life, and in

death loses all strength. It is weak to perform our own will, weaker still to perform the heavenly will. It is weak to do and weak to suffer—but it is to be “raised in power, all infirmity being completely removed.”

How far this power will be physical and how far spiritual we need not speculate—where the material ends and the spiritual begins we need not define. We shall be as the angels, and we have found no difficulty in believing that these pure spirits “excel in strength,” nor in understanding Peter, when he says that angels are “greater in power and might.” Our body shall be “raised in power.”

Here, too, the body is a natural or soulish body—a body fit for the soul, for the lowest faculties of our mental nature. But according to the Apostle in the Corinthians, it is to be raised a spiritual body, adapted to the noble portion of our nature, suitable to be the dwelling place and the instrument of our new-born Grace-given life. This body at present is no assistance to the spirit of prayer or praise. It rather hinders than helps us in spiritual exercises. Often the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

We sleep when we ought to watch, and faint when we should pursue. Even its joys as well as its sorrows tend to distract devotion—but when this body shall be transformed, it shall be a body suitable for the highest aspirations of our perfected and glorified humanity—a spiritual body like unto the body of the Glory of Christ. Here the body is sinful, its members have been instruments of unrighteousness. It is true that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but, alas, there are traces about it of the time when it was a den of thieves!

The spots and wrinkles of sin are not yet removed. Its materialism is not yet so refined as to be an assistance to the Spirit. It gravitates downwards, and it has a bias from the right line. But it awaits the last change, and then it shall be perfectly sinless, as alabaster white and pure upon which stain of sin did never come. Like the newly driven snow, it will be immaculately chaste. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Being sinless, the body, when it shall be raised again, shall be painless. Who shall count the number of our pains while in this present house of clay? Truly we that are in this tabernacle do groan! Does it not sometimes appear to the children of sickness as if this body were fashioned with a view to suffering? As if all its nerves, sinews, veins, pulses, vessels, and valves were parts of a curious instrument upon which every note of the entire gamut of pain might be produced? Patience, you who linger in this shattered tenement—a house not made with hands awaits you!

Up yonder no sorrow and sighing are met with. The chastising rod shall fall no longer when the faultiness is altogether removed. As the new body will be without pain, so will it be superior to weariness. The Glory body will not yield to faintness, nor fail through lethargy. Is it not implied that the spiritual body does not need to sleep, when we read that they serve God day and night in His temple? In a word, the bodies of the saints, like the body of Christ, will be perfect!

There shall be nothing lacking and nothing faulty. If saints die in the feebleness of age they shall not rise thus. Or if they have lost a sense or a limb or are halt or maimed, they shall not be so in Heaven—for as to body and soul, “they are without fault before the Throne of God.” “We shall be like He,” is true of all the saints, and hence none will be otherwise than fair, and beautiful, and perfect. The righteous shall be like Christ, of whom it is still true that not a bone of Him shall be broken, so not a part of our body after its change shall be bruised, battered, or otherwise than perfect.

Put all this together, Brethren, and what a stretch it is from this vile body to the glorious body which shall be! Yet when Christ comes this miracle of miracles shall be worked in the twinkling of an eye! Heap up epithets descriptive of the vileness of this body. Think of it in all its weakness, infirmity, sin, and liability to death. Then admire our Lord’s body in all its holiness, happiness, purity, perfection, and immortality. And know assuredly that, at Christ’s coming, this change shall take place upon every one of the elect of God.

All Believers shall undergo this marvelous transformation in a moment. Behold and wonder! Imagine that the change should occur to you now. What a display of power! My imagination is not able to give you a picture of the transformation. But those who will be alive, and remain at the coming of the Son of God will undergo it, and so enter Glory without death. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,” and therefore the bodies of living Believers shall in the twinkling of an eye pass from the one state into the other. They shall be transformed from the vile to the glorious, from the state of humiliation into the state of Glory, by the power of the coming Savior.

The miracle is amazing if you view it as occurring to those who shall be alive when Christ comes. Reflect, however, that a very large number of the saints, when the Lord shall appear a second time, will already be in their graves. Some of these will have been buried long enough to have become corrupt. If you could remove the mold and break open the coffin, what would you find but foulness and putrefaction? But those moldering relics are the body of the saint’s humiliation—and that very body is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body! Admire the miracle as you survey the mighty change!

Look down into the loathsome tomb, and, if you can endure it, gaze upon the putrid mass. This, even this, is to be transformed into Christ’s likeness! What a work is this! And what a Savior is He who shall achieve it! Go a little further. Many of those whom Christ will thus raise will have been buried so long that all traces of them will have disappeared! They will have melted back into the common dust of earth, so that if their bones were searched for, not a vestige of them could be found—nor could the keenest searcher after human remains detect a single particle. They have slept in quiet through long ages in their lonely graves—till they have become absorbed into the soil as part and parcel of mother earth.

No, there is not a bone, nor a piece of a bone left. Their bodies are as much one with earth as the drop of rain which fell upon the wave is one with the sea—yet they shall be raised! The trumpet call shall fetch them back from the dust with which they have mingled, and dust to dust, bone to bone, the anatomy shall be rebuilt and then refashioned. Does your wonder grow? Does not your faith accept with joy the marvel, and yet feel it to be a marvel none the less?

Son of man, I will lead you into an inner chamber more full of wonder yet! There are many thousands of God’s people to whom a quiet slumber in the grave was denied. They were cut off by martyrdom, were sawn asunder, or cast to the LIONS. Tens of thousands of the precious bodies of the saints have perished by fire. Their limbs have been blown in clouds of smoke to the four winds of Heaven, and even the handful of ashes which remained at the foot of the stake, their relentless persecutors have thrown into rivers to be carried to the ocean, and divided to every shore.

Some of the children of the resurrection were devoured by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheaters or left a prey to buzzards and ravens on the gallows. In all sorts of ways have the saints’ bodies been hacked and hewn, and, as a consequence, the particles of those bodies have, no doubt, been absorbed into various vegetable growths, and having been eaten by animals have mingled with the flesh of beasts. But what of that?

“What of that?” you say, “how can these bodies be refashioned? By what possibility can the selfsame bodies be raised again?” I answer it needs a miracle to make any of these dry bones live, and a miracle being granted, impossibility vanishes. He who formed each atom from nothing can gather each particle again from confusion. The omniscient Lord of Providence tracks each molecule of matter, and knows its position and history as a shepherd knows his sheep. And if it is necessary to constitute the identity of the body, to gather every atom, He can do it. It may not, however, be necessary at all, and I do not assert that it will be, for there may be a true identity without sameness of material.

Even as this, my body, is the same as that in which I lived twenty years ago, yet, in all probability there is not a grain of the same matter in it. God is able, then, to cause that the same body which on earth we wear in our humiliation, which we call a vile body, shall be fashioned like unto Christ’s body. No difficulties, however stern, that can be suggested from science or physical law, shall for a single instant stand in the way of the accomplishment of this transformation by Christ the King.

What marvels rise before me! Indeed, it needs faith, and we thank God we have it. The resurrection of Christ has forever settled in our minds, beyond all controversy, the resurrection of all who are in Him. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they, also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” Still it is a marvel of marvels, a miracle which needs the fullness of the Deity. Of whom but God, very God of very God, could it be said that He shall change our bodies, and make them like unto His glorious body?

I know how feebly I have spoken upon this sublime subject, but I am not altogether regretful of that, for I do not wish to fix your thoughts on my words for a single moment. I only desire your minds to grasp and grapple with the great thought of the power of Christ—by which He shall raise and change the bodies of the saints.

II. We will now pass on. Here is the point we aim at. Consider, in the second place, that THIS POWER WHICH IS TO RAISE THE DEAD IS RESIDENT IN CHRIST AT THIS MOMENT. So says the text, “according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” It is not some new power which Christ will take to Himself in the latter days and then for the first time display. No, the power which will arouse the dead is the same power which is in Him at this moment—which is going forth from Him at this instant in the midst of His Church and among the sons of men. I call your attention to this, and invite you to follow the track of the text.

First, notice that all the power by which the last transformation will be worked is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ now as the Savior. “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus.” When Christ raises the dead it will be as a Savior, and it is precisely in that capacity that we need the exercise of His power at this moment. Fix this, my Brethren, in your hearts. We are seeking the salvation of men, and we are not seeking a hopeless thing—for Jesus Christ is able, as a Savior, to subdue all things to Himself. So the text expressly tells us. It does not merely say that as a raiser of the dead He is able to subdue all things, but as the SAVIOR, the Lord Jesus Christ.

His titles are expressly given. He is set forth to us as the Lord, the Savior, the Anointed—and in that capacity is said to be able to subdue all things to Himself. Happy tidings for us! My Brethren, how large may our prayers be for the conversion of the sons of men! How great our expectations, how confident our efforts! Nothing is too hard for our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing in the way of saving work is beyond His power. If, as a Savior, He wakes the dead in the years to come, He can quicken the spiritually dead even now! These crowds of dead souls around us in this area and in these galleries—He can awaken by His quickening voice and living Spirit.

The resurrection is to be according to the working of His mighty power, and that same energy is in operation now. In its fullness the power dwells in Him. Let us stir Him up! Let us cry unto Him mightily, and give Him no rest till He puts forth that selfsame power now! Think not, my Brethren, that this would be extraordinary and unusual. Your own conversion, if you have truly been raised from your spiritual death, was by the same power that we desire to see exerted upon others.

Your own regeneration was, indeed, as remarkable an instance of Divine power as the resurrection itself shall be. Yes, and I venture to say it, your spiritual life this very day or any day you choose to mention, is, in itself a display of the same working which shall transform this vile body into its glorious condition. The power of the resurrection is being put forth today—it is pulsing through the quickened portion of this audience! It is heaving with life each bosom that beats with love to God! It is preserving the life-courses in the souls of all the spiritual, so that they go not back to their former death in sin. The power which will work the resurrection will be wonderful, but it will be no new thing. It is everywhere to be beheld in operation in the Church of God at this very moment by those who have eyes to see it.

And herein I join with the Apostle in his prayer, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. That you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills All in All.”

Note next that the terms of our text imply that opposition may be expected to this power, but that all resistance will be overcome. That word “subdue” supposes a force to be conquered and brought into subjection. “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Herein is a great wonder! There will be no opposition to the resurrection. The trumpet sound shall bring the dead from their graves, and no particle shall disobey the summons. But to spiritual resurrection there is resistance—resistance which only Omnipotence can vanquish.

In the conversion of sinners natural depravity is an opposing force. For men are set upon their sins and love not the things of God. Neither will they hearken to the voice of Mercy. My Brethren, to remove all our fears concerning our Lord’s ability to save, the word is here used, “He is able”— not only to raise all things from the dead, but “to subdue all things to Himself.” Here again I would bid you take the encouragement the text presents you. If there is opposition to the Gospel, He is able to subdue it. If in one man there is a prejudice, if in another man the heart is darkened with error.

If one man hates the very name of Jesus, if another is so wedded to his sins that he cannot part from them—if opposition has assumed in some a very determined character—does not the text meet every case? “He is able to subdue all things,” to conquer them, to break down the barriers that interpose to prevent the display of His power, and to make those very barriers the means of setting forth that power the more gloriously.

“He is able even to subdue all things.” O take this to the Mercy Seat, you who will be seeking the souls of men this month! Take it to Him and plead this Word of the Holy Spirit in simple, childlike faith. When there is a difficulty you cannot overcome, take it to Him, for He is “able to subdue.”

Note next that the language of our text includes all supposable cases. He is able to “subdue all things unto Himself.” Not here and there one, but “all things.” Brethren, there is no man in this world so fallen, debased, depraved, and willfully wicked, that Jesus cannot save him—not even among those who live beyond the reach of ordinary ministry. He can bring the heathen to the Gospel, or the Gospel to them. The wheels of Providence can be so arranged that salvation shall be brought to the outcasts.

Even war, famine, and plague, may become messengers for Christ, for He, too, rides upon the wings of the wind. There lived some few years ago in Perugia, in Italy, a man of the loosest morals and the worst conceivable disposition. He had given up all religion. He loathed God, and had arrived at such a desperate state of mind that he had conceived an affection for the devil, and endeavored to worship the Evil One. Imagining Satan to be the image and embodiment of all rebellion, free-thinking, and lawlessness, he deified God in his own mind and desired nothing better than to be a devil, himself.

On one occasion, when a Protestant missionary had been in Perugia preaching, a priest happened to say in this man’s hearing, that there were Protestants in Perugia and the city was being defiled by heretics. “And who do you think Protestants are?” said he. “They are men who have renounced Christ and worship the devil.” A gross and outrageous lie was this, but it answered far other ends than its author meant. The man, hearing this, thought, “Oh, then, I will go and meet with them, for I am much of their mind.”

And away he went to the Protestant meeting, in the hope of finding an assembly who propagated lawlessness and worshipped the devil. He there heard the Gospel and was saved! Behold in this and in ten thousand cases equally remarkable, the ability of our Lord to subdue all things unto Himself. How can any man whom God ordains to save escape from that eternal love which is as Omnipresent as the Deity itself? “He is able to subdue all things to Himself.” If His sword cannot reach the far-off ones, His arrows can—and even at this hour they are sharp in His enemy’s hearts.

No boastful Goliath can stand before our David. Though the weapon which He uses today is but a stone from the brook, yet shall the Philistine be subdued. If there should be in this place a Deist, an Atheist, a Romanist, or even a lover of the devil—if he is but a man, mercy yet can come to him. Jesus Christ is able to subdue him unto Himself. None have gone too far, and none are too hardened. While the Christ lives in Heaven we need never despair of any that are still in this mortal life—“He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”

You will observe in the text that nothing is said concerning the unfitness of the means. My fears often are lest souls should not be saved by our instrumentality because of faultiness in us. We fear lest we should not be prayerful enough or energetic or earnest enough. Or that it should be said, “He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” But the text seems to obliterate man altogether—“He is able to subdue all things unto Himself”—that is to say, Jesus does it, Jesus can do it, will do it all.

By the feeblest means He can work mightily, can take hold of us. Unfit as we are for service, He can make us fit, can grasp us in our folly and teach us wisdom—take us in our weakness and make us strong. My Brethren, if we had to find resources for ourselves, and to rely upon ourselves, our enterprise might well be renounced. But since He is able, we will cast the burden of this work on Him. We will go to Him in believing prayer, asking Him to work mightily through us to the praise of His glory, for, “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

Note that the ability is said in the text to be present with the Savior now. I have already pointed that out to you, but I refer to it again. The resurrection is a matter of the future, but the working which shall accomplish the resurrection is a matter of the present. “According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,” Jesus is as strong now as He ever will be, for He changes not. At this moment He is as able to convert souls as at the period of the brightest revival, or at Pentecost itself.

There are no ebbs and flows with Christ’s power. Omnipotence is in the hand that once was pierced, permanently abiding there. Oh, if we could but rouse it! If we could but bring the Captain of the host to the field again, to fight for His Church, to work His servants! What marvels should we see, for He is able. We are not straitened in Him, we are straitened in ourselves if straitened at all.

Once more, for your comfort let it be remembered that the fact of there having been, as it were, a considerable time in which few have been converted to Christ, is no proof that His power is slackening. For it is well known to you that very few have as yet been raised from the dead, only here and there one like Lazarus and the young man at the gates of Nain. But you do not, therefore, doubt the Lord’s power to raise the dead. Though He tarries we do not mistrust His power to fulfill His promise in due time.

Now the power which is restrained, as it were, so that it does not work the resurrection yet, is the same which may have been restrained in the Christian Church for awhile—but which will be as surely put forth before long in conversion as it will be in the end of time to accomplish the resurrection. Let us cry unto our Lord, for He has but to will it and thousands of sinners will be saved. Let us lift up our hearts to Him who has but to speak the word and whole nations shall be born unto Him.

The resurrection will not be a work occupying centuries, it will be accomplished at once. And so it may be in this House of Prayer, and throughout London, and throughout the world, Christ will do a great and speedy work to the amazement of all beholders. He will send forth the rod of His strength out of Zion, and rule in the midst of His enemies. He will unmask His batteries, He will spring His mines, He will advance His outworks. He will subdue the city of His adversaries, and ride victoriously through the Bozrah of His foes. Who shall stay His hand? Who shall say unto Him, “What are You doing?”

I wish we had time to work out the parallel which our text suggests, between the resurrection and the subduing of all things. The resurrection will be worked by the Divine power, and the subduing of sinners is a precisely similar instance of salvation. All men are dead in sin, but He can raise them. Many of them are corrupt with vice, but He can transform them. Some of them are, as it were, lost to all hope—like the dead body scattered to the winds—desperate cases for whom even pity seems to waste her sighs. But He who raises the dead of all sorts, with a word can raise sinners of all sorts by the selfsame power.

And as the dead, when raised, are made like Christ, so the wicked, when converted, are made like Jesus, too. Brilliant examples of virtue shall be found in those who were terrible instances of vice. The most depraved and dissolute shall become the most devout and earnest. From the vile body to the Glory body—what a leap! And from the sinner, damnable in lust—to the saint bright with the radiance of sanctity—what a space! The leap seems very far, but Omnipotence can bridge the chasm.

The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to do it. He is able to do it in ten thousand thousand cases—able to do it at this very moment. My anxious desire is to engrave this one thought upon your hearts, my Brothers and Sisters, yes, to write it on the palms of those hands with which you are about to serve the Lord. Learn it and forget it not—almighty power lies with Jesus to achieve the purpose upon which our heart is set, namely, the conversion of many unto Himself.

III. I said I would ask you to consider, in the third place, THE WORK WHICH WE DESIRE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED. I will not detain you, however, with that consideration farther than this. Brethren, we long to see the Savior subduing souls unto Himself. Not to our way of thinking. Not to our Church. Not to the honor of our powers of persuasion, but “unto Himself.” “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

O Sinner, how I wish you were subdued to Jesus! To kiss those dear feet that were nailed for you, to love in life, Him who loved you to the death! Ah, Soul, it were a blessed subjection for you. Never subject of earthly monarch so happy in his king as you would be. God is our witness, we who preach the Gospel—we do not want to subdue you to ourselves—as though we would rule you and be lords over your spirits. It is to Jesus, to Jesus only, that we would have you subdued.

O that you desired this subjection! It would be liberty, and peace, and joy to you! Notice that this subjection is eminently to be desired, since it consists in transformation. Catch the thought of the text. He transforms the vile body into His glorious body, and this is a part of the subjection of all things unto Himself. But do you call that subjection? Is it not a subjection to be longed after with an insatiable desire—to be so subdued to Christ that I, a poor, vile sinner, may become like He—holy, harmless, undefiled?

This is the subjection that we wish for you, O unconverted ones! We trust we have felt it ourselves. We pray you may feel it, too. He is able to give it to you. Ask it of Him at once. Now breathe the prayer, now believe that the Savior can work the transformation even in you—in you at this very moment. And, O my Brethren in the faith, have faith for sinners now. While they are pleading, plead for them that this subjection which is an uplifting, this conquering which is a liberating, may be accomplished in them!

For, remember again, that to be subjected to Christ is, according to our text, to be fitted for Heaven. He will change our vile body and make it like the body of His Glory. The body of the Glory is a body fitted for Glory, a body which participates in Glory. The Lord Jesus can make you, Sinner, though now fitted for Hell, fitted for Heaven, fitted for Glory, and breathe into you now an anticipation of that Glory, in the joy and peace of mind which His pardon will bring to you.

It must be a very sad thing to be a soldier under any circumstances. To have to cut and hack and kill and subdue, even in a righteous cause, is cruel work. But to be a soldier of King Jesus is an honor and a joy. The service of Jesus is a grand service. Brethren, we have been earnestly seeking to capture some hearts that are here present, to capture them for Jesus. It has been a long and weary siege up till this hour. We have summoned them to surrender, and opened fire upon them with the Gospel, but as yet in vain. I have strived to throw a few live shells into the very heart of their city, in the form of warning and threat and exhortation.

I know there have been explosions in the hearts of some of you, which have done your sins some damage, killed some of the little ones that would have grown up to greater iniquity. You have been carefully block

aded by Providence and Divine Grace. Your hearts have found no provision for joy in sin, no helps to peace in unrighteousness. How I wish I could starve you out until you would yield to my Lord, the Crown Prince, who again, today, demands that you yield to Him. It is dreadful to compel a city to open its gates unwillingly—to let an enemy come in. For however gentle the enemy is, his face is an unwelcome sight to the vanquished.

But oh, how I wish I could burst open the gates of a sinner’s heart today for the Prince Emmanuel to come in! He who is at your gates is not an alien monarch, He is your rightful prince. He is your Friend and Lover. It will not be a strange face that you will see, when Jesus comes to reign in you. When the King, in His beauty, wins your soul, you will think yourselves a thousand fools that you did not receive Him before. Instead of fearing that He will ransack your soul, you will open all its doors and invite Him to search each room.

You will cry, “Take all, You blessed Monarch, it shall be most mine when it is Yours. Take all, and reign and rule.” I propound terms of capitulation to you, O sinner. They are but these—yield up yourself to Christ. Give up your works and ways, both good and bad, and trust in Him to save you. Be His servant henceforth and forever. While I thus invite you, I trust He will speak through me to you and win you to Himself. I shall not plead in vain, the Word shall not fall to the ground. I fall back upon the delightful consolation of our text, “He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” May He prove His power this morning. Amen and Amen.

*PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.*

MESSRS, PASSMORE AND ALABASTER, Paternoster Row, beg to inform the sermon readers that the second volume of MR. SPURGEON’S GREAT WORK UPON THE PSALMS is receiving the most favorable notice of the reviewers. The first edition of Vol. I is nearly exhausted, and a second edition will be issued. The large volumes, unusually crowded with matter, are published at 8s. each, a price far below the usual charge for such books. The following extract is from the Baptist Magazine—“It seems to us that Mr. Spurgeon has got himself not only to the devout and scholarly exposition of the Psalms, but also to the rendering of his work positively fascinating by its many charms…In the possession of this book the young will find themselves at college, with the learned and the good of all ages for their tutors, and maturer Christians will have the largest spiritual knowledge increased, and its richest experiences strengthened.”

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1959 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY— “STAND FAST”  
SERMON NO. 1959

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 17, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For our citizenship is in Heaven, from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby  
He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.”***Php 3:20-21***;** *Php 4:1***.**

EVERY doctrine of the Word of God has its practical bearing. As each tree bears seed after its kind, so does every Truth of God bring forth practical virtues. Hence you find the Apostle Paul very full of “therefore”—his therefores being the conclusions drawn from certain statements of Divine Truth. I marvel that our excellent translators should have divided the argument from the conclusion by making a new chapter where there is least reason for it.

Last Lord’s Day I spoke with you concerning the most sure and certain Resurrection of our Lord Jesus [#1958—The First Appearance of the Risen Lord to the Eleven]—now there is a practical force in that Truth of God which constitutes part of what is meant by, “the power of His Resurrection.” Since the Lord has risen and will surely come a second time—and will raise the bodies of His people at His coming—there is something to wait for and a grand reason for steadfastness while thus waiting. We are looking for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from Heaven and that He shall “fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory.” Therefore let us stand fast in the position which will secure us this honor. Let us keep our posts until the coming of the great Captain shall release the sentinels. The glorious resurrection will abundantly repay us for all the toil and travail we may have to undergo in the battle for the Lord. The Glory to be revealed even now casts a light upon our path and causes sunshine within our hearts! The hope of this happiness makes us even now strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Paul was deeply anxious that those in whom he had been the means of kindling the heavenly hope might be preserved faithful until the coming of Christ. He trembled lest any of them should seem to draw back and prove traitors to their Lord. He dreaded lest he should lose what he hoped he had gained, by their turning aside from the faith. Hence he beseeches them to “stand fast.” He expressed in the sixth verse of the first chapter his conviction that He who had begun a good work in them would perform it, but his intense love made him exhort them, saying, “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” By such exhortations, final perseverance is promoted and secured.

Paul has fought bravely and, in the case of the Philippian converts, he believes that he has secured the victory, but he fears lest it should yet be lost. He reminds me of the death of that British hero, Wolfe, who, on the heights of Quebec, received a mortal wound. It was just at the moment when the enemy fled and when he knew that they were running, a smile was on his face—and he cried, “Hold me up. Let not my brave soldiers see me drop. The day is ours. Oh, do keep it!” His sole anxiety was to make the victory sure! Thus warriors die and thus Paul lived. His very soul seems to cry, “We have won the day. Oh, do keep it!”

O my beloved Hearers, I believe that many of you are “in the Lord,” but I entreat you to “stand fast in the Lord.” In your case, also, the day is won, but oh, do keep it! There is the pith of all I have to say to you this morning—may God the Holy Spirit write it on your hearts! Having done all things well up to now, I entreat you to obey the injunction of Jude, to, “keep yourselves in the love of God,” and to join with me in adoring Him who alone is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy. Unto Him be glory forever! Amen.

In leading out your thoughts I will keep to the following order— First, it seems to me from the text that the Apostle perceived that these Philippian Christians were in their right place—they were, “in the Lord,” and in such a position that he could safely bid them, “stand fast” in it. Secondly, he longed for them that they should keep their right place— “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” And then, thirdly, he urged the best motives for their keeping their place. These motives are contained in the first two verses of our text, upon which we will enlarge further on.  
I. Paul joyfully perceived that his BELOVED CONVERTS WERE IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE. It is a very important thing, indeed, that we should begin well. The start is not everything, but it is a great deal. It has been said by the old proverb, that, “Well begun is half done,” and it is certainly so in the things of God. It is vitally important to enter in at the strait gate—to start on the heavenly journey from the right point. I have no doubt that many slips and falls and apostasies among professors are due to the fact that they were not right at first—the foundation was always upon the sand and when the house came down, at last, it was no more than might have been expected. A flaw in the foundation is pretty sure to be followed by a crack in the superstructure! See to it that you lay a good foundation. It is better to have no repentance than a repentance which needs to be repented of! It is better to have no faith than a false faith! It is better to make no profession of religion than to make an untruthful one! God give us Grace that we may not make a mistake in learning the alphabet of godliness, or else in all our learning we shall blunder on and increase in error. We should learn early the difference between Grace and merit, between the purpose of God and the will of man, between trust in God and confidence in the flesh. If we do not start aright, the further we go, the further we shall be from our desired end and the more thoroughly in the wrong shall we find ourselves. Yes, it is of prime importance that our new birth and our first love should be genuine beyond all question.  
The only position, however, in which we can begin aright is to be, “in the Lord.” This is to begin as we may safely go on. This is the essential point. It is a very good thing for Christians to be in the Church, but if you are in the Church before you are in the Lord, you are out of place! It is a good thing to be engaged in holy work, but if you are in holy work before you are in the Lord, you will have no heart for it, neither will the Lord accept it! It is not essential that you should be in this Church or in that Church—but it is essential that you should be, “in the Lord!” It is not essential that you should be in the Sunday school, nor in the Working Meeting, nor in the Tract Society—but it is essential to the last degree that you should be in the Lord! The Apostle rejoiced over those that were converted at Philippi because he knew that they were in the Lord. They were where he wished them to remain and, therefore, he said, “Stand fast in the Lord.”  
What is it to be, “in the Lord”? Well, Brothers and Sisters, we are in the Lord vitally and evidently when we fly to the Lord Jesus by repentance and faith and make Him to be our refuge and hiding place. Is it so with you? Have you fled out of self? Are you trusting in the Lord, alone? Have you come to Calvary and beheld your Savior? As the doves build their nests in the rocks, have you thus made your home in Jesus? There is no shelter for a guilty soul but in His wounded side! Have you come there? Are you in Him? Then stay there. You will never have a better refuge! In fact, there is no other. No other name is given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved. I cannot tell you to stand fast in the Lord, unless you are there—hence my first enquiry is—Are you in Christ? Is He your only confidence? In His life, His death and His Resurrection do you find the grounds of your hope? Is He, Himself, all your salvation and all your desire? If so, stand fast in Him.  
Next, these people, in addition to having fled to Christ for refuge, were now in Christ as to their daily life. They had heard Him say, “Abide in Me” and, therefore, they remained in the daily enjoyment of Him, in reliance upon Him, in obedience to Him, and in the earnest copying of His example. They were Christians! That is to say, persons upon whom was named the name of Christ. They were endeavoring to realize the power of His death and Resurrection as a sanctifying influence, killing their sins and fostering their virtues. They were laboring to reproduce His image in themselves so that they might bring glory to His name. Their lives were spent within the circle of their Savior’s influence. Are you so, my dear Friends? Then stand fast! You will never find a nobler example! You will never be saturated with a more Divine spirit than that of Christ Jesus your Lord! Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, let us do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and so live in Him.  
These Philippians had, moreover, realized that they were in Christ by a real and vital union with Him. They had come to feel, not like separated individualities, copying a model, but as members of a body made like their Head. By a living, loving, lasting union, they were joined to Christ as their Covenant Head. They could say, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?” Do you know what it is to feel that the life which is in you is first in Christ and still flows from Him, even as the life of the branch is mainly in the stem? “I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” This is to be in Christ! Are you in Him in this sense? Forgive my pressing the question. If you answer me in the affirmative, I shall then entreat you to “stand fast” in Him. It is in Him and in Him, only, that spiritual life is to be sustained, even as only from Him can it be received! To be engrafted into Christ is salvation—but to abide in Christ is the full enjoyment of it! True union to Christ is eternal life. Paul, therefore, rejoiced over these Philippians because they were joined unto the Lord in one spirit!  
This expression is very short, but very full. “In Christ.” Does it not mean that we are in Christ as the birds are in the air which buoys them up and enables them to fly? Are we not in Christ as the fish are in the sea? Our Lord has become our element—vital and all surrounding! In Him we live, move and have our being. He is in us and we are in Him. We are filled with all the fullness of God because all fullness dwells in Christ and we dwell in Him. Christ to us is all. He is in all and He is All in All! Jesus to us is everything in everything. Without Him we can do nothing and we are nothing! Thus are we emphatically in Him. If you have reached this point, “stand fast” in it! If you dwell in the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most high, abide under the shadow of the Almighty! Do you sit at His table and eat of His dainties? Then prolong the visit and think not of removal. Say in your soul—  
*“Here would I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come;  
No more a stranger, or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”*  
Has Jesus brought you into His green pastures? Then lie down in them. Go no further, for you will never fare better. Stay with your Lord, however long the night, for only in Him have you hope of morning!  
You see, then, that these people were where they should be—in the Lord—and this was the reason why the Apostle took such delight in them. Kindly read the first verse of the fourth chapter and see how he loves them and joys over them. He heaps up titles of love! Some dip their morsel in vinegar, but Paul’s words were saturated with honey. Here we not only have sweet words, but they mean something—his love was real and fervent! The very heart of Paul is written out large in this verse—“Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.”  
Because they were in Christ, first of all they were Paul’s Brothers and Sisters. This was a new relationship, not earthly, but heavenly. What did this Jew from Tarsus know about the Philippians? Many of them were Gentiles. Time was when he would have called them dogs and despised them as the uncircumcised. But now he says, “My brethren.” That poor word has become very hackneyed. We talk of brethren without particularly much of brotherly love, but true Brothers and Sisters have a love for one another which is very unselfish and admirable—and so there is between real Christians a brotherhood which they will neither disown, nor dissemble, nor forget! It is said of our Lord, “For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” And surely they need never be ashamed to call one another brethren! Paul, at any rate, looks at the jailor, that jailor who had set his feet in the stocks—and he looks at the jailor’s family, at Lydia and many others—in fact, at the whole company that he had gathered at Philippi and he salutes them lovingly as, “My brethren.” Their names were written in the same family register because they were in Christ and, therefore, had one Father in Heaven!  
Next, the Apostle calls them, “my dearly beloved.” The verse almost begins with this word and it quite finishes with it. The repetition makes it mean, “My doubly dear ones.” Such is the love which every true servant of Christ will have for those who have been begotten to the faith of Christ by his means. Oh, yes, if you are in Christ, His ministers must love you! How could there be a lack of affection in our hearts towards you, since we have been the means of bringing you to Jesus? Without cant or display we call you our “dearly Beloved.”  
Then the Apostle calls them his “longed for,” that is, his most desired ones. He first desired to see them converted. After that he desired to see them baptized. Then he desired to see them exhibiting all the Graces of Christians. When he saw holiness in them, he desired to visit them and commune with them. Their constant kindness created in him a strong desire to speak with them face to face. He loved them and desired their company because they were in Christ! So he speaks of them as those for whom he longed. His delight was in thinking of them and in hoping to visit them. Then he adds, “My joy and crown.” Paul had been the means of their salvation and when he thought of that blessed result, he never regretted all that he had suffered—his persecutions among the Gentiles seemed light, indeed, since these priceless souls were his reward! Though he was nothing but a poor prisoner of Christ, yet he talks in right royal style—they are his crown.  
They were his stephanos, or crown given as a reward for his life-race. This, among the Greeks, was usually a wreath of flowers placed around the victor’s brow. Paul’s crown would never fade. He writes as he felt the amaranth around his temples—even now he looks upon the Philippians as his chaplet of honor! They were his joy and his crown! He anticipated, I do not doubt, that throughout eternity it would be a part of his Heaven to see them amid their blessedness and to know that he helped to bring them to that felicity by leading them to Christ! O Beloved, it is, indeed, our highest joy that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain—you who have been snatched as “brands from the burning” and are now living to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ—you are our prize, our crown, our joy!  
These converts were all this to Paul simply because they were “in Christ.” They had begun well; they were where they should be and he, therefore, rejoiced in them.  
II. But secondly, it was for this reason that HE LONGED THAT THEY SHOULD STAY THERE. He entreated them to stand fast. “So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” The beginning of religion is not the whole of it. You must not suppose that the sum of godliness is contained within the experience of a day or two, or a week, or a few months, or even a few years. Precious are the feelings which attend conversion, but dream not that repentance, faith and so forth are for a season and then all is done with! I am afraid there are some who secretly say, “Everything is now complete. I have experienced the necessary change, I have been to see the Elders and the Pastor. I have been baptized and received into the Church—now all is right forever.”  
That is a false view of your condition! In conversion you have started in the race, but you must run to the end of the course. In your confession of Christ you have carried your tools into the vineyard, but the day’s work now begins. Remember, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Godliness is a life-long business. The working out of the salvation which the Lord, Himself, works in you is not a matter of certain hours, or of a limited period of life. Salvation is unfolded throughout all our sojourn here. We continue to repent and to believe—and even the process of our conversion continues as we are changed more and more into the image of our Lord. Final perseverance is the necessary evidence of genuine conversion!  
In proportion as we rejoice over converts, we feel an intense bitterness when any disappoint us and turn out to be merely temporary campfollowers. We sigh over the seed which sprang up so speedily, but which withers so soon because it has neither root nor depth of earth. We were ready to say—“Ring the bells of Heaven”—but the bells of Heaven did not ring because these people talked about Christ and said they were in Christ, but it was all a delusion! After a while, for one reason or another, they went back. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” Our Churches suffer most seriously from the great numbers who drop out of their ranks and either go back to the world, or else must be pursuing a very secret and solitary path in their way to Heaven, for we hear no more of them. Our joy is turned to disappointment; our crown of laurel becomes a circle of faded leaves and we are weary at the remembrance of it. With what earnestness, therefore, would we say to you who are beginning the race, “Continue in your course. We beseech you turn not aside, neither slacken your running till you have won the prize!”  
I heard an expression yesterday which pleased me much. I spoke about the difficulty of keeping on. “Yes,” answered my friend, “and it is harder, still, to keep on keeping on.” So it is. There is the pinch. I know lots of fellows who are wonders at the start. What a rush they make! But then there is no stay in them—they soon lose breath. The difference between the spurious and the real Christian lies in this staying power. The real Christian has a life within him which can never die—an incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever—but the spurious Christian begins after a fashion, but ends almost as soon as he begins! He is esteemed a saint, but turns out a hypocrite. He makes a fair show for a while, but soon he quits the way of holiness and makes his own damnation sure. God save you, dear Friends, from anything which looks like apostasy! Hence I would, with all my might, press upon you these two most weighty words— “Stand fast.”  
I will put the exhortation thus—“Stand fast doctrinally.” In this age all the ships in the waters are pulling up their anchors! They are drifting with the tide. They are driven about with every wind. It is your wisdom to put down more anchors. I have taken the precaution to cast four anchors out of the stern, as well as to see that the great bower anchor is in its proper place. I will not budge an inch from the old doctrine for any man! Now that the cyclone is triumphant over many a bowing wall and tottering fence, those who are built upon the One Foundation must prove its value by standing fast! We will listen to no teaching but that of the Lord Jesus! If you see a Truth to be in God’s Word, grasp it by your faith—and if it is unpopular, grapple it to you as with hooks of steel! If you are despised as a fool for holding it, hold it the more! Like an oak, take deeper root, because the winds would tear you from your place. Defy reproach and ridicule and you have already vanquished it. Stand fast, like the British squares in the olden times. When fierce assaults were made upon them, every man seemed transformed to rock. We might have wandered from the ranks a little in more peaceful times, to look after the fascinating flowers which grow on every side of our march—but now we know that the enemy surrounds us—so we keep strictly to the line of march and tolerate no roaming. The watchword of the host of God just now is—“Stand fast!” Hold to the faith once delivered to the saints. Hold fast the form of sound words and deviate not one jot or tittle from them. Stand fast doctrinally!  
Practically, also, abide firm in the

ight, the true, the holy. This is of the utmost importance. The barriers are broken down—they would amalgamate Church and world—yes, even Church and stage. It is proposed to combine God and devil in one service! Christ and Belial are to perform on one stage! Surely now is the time when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and very dirty straw too. So they say. But I repeat to you this Word of God, “Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Write, “holiness unto the Lord,” not only on your altars, but upon the bells of the horses! Let everything be done as before the living God. Do all things unto holiness and edification. Strive together to maintain the purity of the disciples of Christ! Take up your cross and go outside the camp bearing His reproach. If you have already stood apart in your decision for the Lord, continue to do so. Stand fast! In nothing be moved by the laxity of the age. In nothing be affected by the current of modern opinion. Say to yourself, “I will do as Christ bids me to the utmost of my ability. I will follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” In these times of worldliness, impurity, self-indulgence and error, it becomes the Christian to gather up his skirts and keep his feet and his garments clean from the pollution which lies all around him. We must be more Puritan and precise than we have been. Oh, for Grace to stand fast!  
Mind also that you stand fast experimentally. Pray that your inward experience may be a close adhesion to your Master. Do not go astray from His Presence. Neither climb with those who dream of perfection in the flesh, nor grovel with those who doubt the possibility of present salvation. Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be your sole treasure and let your heart be always with Him. Stand fast in faith in His Atonement, in confidence in His Divinity, in assurance of His Second Advent. I pine to know within my soul the power of His Resurrection and to have unbroken fellowship with Him. In communion with the Father and the Son let us stand fast! He shall fare well whose heart and soul, affections and understanding are wrapped up in Christ Jesus and in no one else. Concerning your inward life, your secret prayer, your walk with God, here is the watchword of the day—“Stand fast.”  
To put it very plainly, “Stand fast in the Lord,” without wishing for another trust. Do not desire to have any hope but that which is in Christ. Do not entertain the proposition that you should unite another confidence to your confidence in the Lord. Have no hankering after any other fashion of faith except the faith of a sinner in his Savior. All hope but that which is set before us in the Gospel and brought to us by the Lord Jesus is a poisoned delicacy—highly colored, but by no means to be so much as tasted by those who have been fed upon the Bread of Heaven! What do we need more than Jesus? What way of salvation do we seek but that of Grace? What security but the precious blood? Stand fast and wish for no other rock of salvation save the Lord Jesus!  
Next, stand fast without wavering in our trust. Permit no doubt to worry you. Know that Jesus can save you and, what is more, know that He has saved you! So commit yourself to His hands that you are as sure of your salvation as of your existence! The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin this day—His righteousness covers us and His life quickens us into newness of life. Tolerate no doubt, mistrust, suspicion, or misgiving. Believe in Christ up to the hilt! As for myself, I will yield to be lost forever if Jesus does not save me! I will have no other string to my bow, no second door of hope, or way of retreat. I could risk a thousand souls on my Lord’s Word and feel no risk. Stand fast, without wishing for another trust and without wavering in the trust you have.  
Moreover, stand fast without wandering into sin. You are tempted this way and that way—stand fast! Inward passions rise. Lusts of the flesh rebel. The devil hurls his fearful suggestions. The men of your own household tempt you. Stand fast! Only so will you be preserved from the torrents of iniquity. Keep close to the example and spirit of your Master and, having done all, still stand.  
As I have said, stand fast without wandering, so next I must say stand fast without wearying. You are a little tired. Never mind, take a little rest and brush up again. “Oh,” you say, “this toil is so monotonous.” Do it better and that will be a change. Your Savior endured His life and labor without this complaint, for zeal had eaten Him up. “Alas,” you cry, “I cannot see results!” Never mind. Wait for results, even as the farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth. “Oh, Sir, I plod along and make no progress.” Never mind, you are a poor judge of your own success. Work on, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. Practice perseverance. Remember that if you have the work of faith and the labor of love, you must complete the trio by adding the patience of hope. You cannot do without this last. “Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”  
I am reminded of Sir Christopher Wren, when he cleared away old St. Paul’s to make room for his splendid pile. He was compelled to use battering rams upon the massive walls. The workmen kept on battering and battering. An enormous force was brought to bear upon the walls for days and nights, but it did not appear to have made the least impression upon the ancient masonry. Yet the great architect knew what he was doing—he bade them keep on incessantly and the ram fell again and again upon the rocky wall till, at length, the whole mass was disintegrating and coming apart—and then each stroke began to tell. At a blow it reeled! At another it quivered! At another it moved visibly. At another it fell over amid clouds of dust! These last strokes did the work!  
Do you think so? No, it was the combination of blows, the first as truly as the last! Keep on with the battering ram. I hope to keep on until I die. And, mark you, I may die and I may not see the errors of the hour totter to their fall, but I shall be perfectly content to sleep in Christ, for I have a sure expectation that this work will succeed in the end! I shall be happy to have done my share of the work, even if I personally see little apparent result. Lord, let Your work appear unto Your servants and we will be content that Your Glory should be reserved for our children. Stand fast, my Brothers and Sisters, in incessant labors, for the end is sure!  
And then, in addition to standing fast in that respect, stand fast without warping. Timber, when it is rather green, is apt to go this way or that. The spiritual weather is very bad, just now, for green wood—it is one day damp with superstition, and another day it is parched with skepticism. Rationalism and Ritualism are both at work. I pray that you may not warp! Keep straight; keep to the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth, for in the Master’s name we bid you, “Stand fast in the Lord.”  
Stand fast, for there is great need. Many walk of whom I have told you, often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ!  
Paul urged them to stand fast because even in his own case, spiritual life was a struggle. Even Paul said, “Not as though I had already attained.” He was pressing forward. He was straining his whole energy by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not expect to be carried to Heaven on a feather bed! He was warring and agonizing. You, Beloved, must do the same. What a grand example of perseverance did Paul set to us all! Nothing enticed him from his steadfastness. “None of these things move me,” he said, “neither count I my life dear unto me.” He has entered into his rest because the Lord his God helped him to stand fast, even to the end. I wish I had power to put this more earnestly, but my very soul goes forth with it. “Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved.”  
III. Thirdly, THE APOSTLE URGED THE BEST MOTIVES FOR THEIR STANDING FAST.  
He says, “Stand fast because of your citizenship.” Read the twentieth verse—“For our citizenship is in Heaven.” Now, if you are what you profess to be, if you are in Christ, you are citizens of the New Jerusalem. Men ought to behave themselves according to their citizenship and not dishonor their city. When a man was a citizen of Athens, in the olden time, he felt it incumbent upon him to be brave. Xerxes said, “These Athenians are not ruled by kings: how will they fight?” “No,” said one, “but every man respects the law and each man is ready to die for his country.” Xerxes soon knew that the same obedience and respect of law ruled the Spartans and that these, because they were of Sparta, were all brave as lions!  
He sends word to Leonidas and his little troop to give up their arms. “Come and take them,” was the courageous reply! The Persian king had myriads of soldiers with him, while Leonidas had only 300 Spartans at his side—yet they kept the pass and it cost the eastern despot many thousands of men to force a passage! The sons of Sparta died rather than desert their post! Every citizen of Sparta felt that he must stand fast—it was not for such a man as he to yield. I like the spirit of Bayard, that “knight without fear and without reproach.” He knew not what fear meant. In his last battle, his spine was broken and he said to those around him, “Place me up against a tree, so that I may sit up and die with my face to the enemy.” Yes, if our backs were broken, if we could no more bear the shield or use the sword, it would be incumbent upon us, as citizens of the New Jerusalem, to die with our faces towards the enemy! We must not yield! We dare not yield if we are of the city of the great King! The martyrs cry to us to stand fast! The cloud of witnesses bending from their thrones above beseech us to stand fast! Yes, all the hosts of the shining ones cry to us, “Stand fast!” Stand fast for God, the truth, holiness—and let no man take your crown.  
The next argument that Paul used was their outlook. “Our citizenship is in Heaven; from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Brethren, Jesus is coming! He is even now on the way. You have heard our tidings till you scarcely credit us, but the Word of God is true and it will surely be fulfilled before long. The Lord is coming, indeed! He promised to come to die and He kept His Word—He now promises to come to reign and you may be sure that He will keep His tryst with His people. He is coming! Ears of faith can hear the sound of His chariot wheels! Every moment of time, every event of Providence is bringing Him nearer. Blessed are those servants who shall not be sleeping when He comes, nor wandering from their posts of duty! Happy shall they be whom their Lord shall find faithfully watching and standing fast in that great day!  
To us, Beloved, He is coming, not as Judge and Destroyer, but as Savior. We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, if we do look for Him, let us “stand fast.” There must be no going into sin, no forsaking the fellowship of the Church, no leaving the Truth, no trying to play fast and loose with godliness, no running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Let us stand so fast in singleness of heart that whenever Jesus comes, we shall be able to say, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God!”  
Sometimes I wait through the weary years with great comfort. There was a ship, some time ago, outside a certain harbor. A heavy sea made the ship roll fearfully. A dense fog blotted out all buoys and lights. The captain never left the wheel. He could not tell his way into the harbor and no pilot could get out to him for a long time. Eager passengers urged him to be courageous and make a dash for the harbor. He said, “No. It is not my duty to run so great a risk. A pilot is required, here, and I will wait for one if I wait a week.” The truest courage is that which can bear to be charged with cowardice! To wait is much wiser than when you cannot hear the foghorn and have no pilot and steam on and wreck your vessel on the rocks! Our prudent captain waited his time and, at last, he spied the pilot’s boat coming to him over the boiling sea. When the pilot was at his work, the captain’s anxious waiting was over. The Church is like that vessel—she is pitched to and fro in the storm and the dark—and the Pilot has not yet come. The weather is very threatening. All around, the darkness hang like a pall. But Jesus will come, walking on the water, before long! He will bring us safely to the desired haven. Let us wait with patience. Stand fast! Stand fast! Jesus is coming and in Him is our sure hope!  
Further, there was another motive. There was an expectation. “He shall change our vile body,” or rather, “body of our humiliation.” Only think of it, dear Friends! No more headaches or heartaches, no more feebleness and fainting, no more inward tumor or consumption! The Lord shall transfigure this body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His Glory. Our frame is now made up of decaying substances—it is of the earth, earthy. “So to the dust, return we must.” This body groans, suffers, becomes diseased and dies. Blessed be God, it shall be wonderfully changed and then there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain!  
The natural appetites of this body engender sad tendencies to sin and, in this respect, it is a “vile body.” It shall not always be so! The great change will deliver it from all that is gross and carnal. It shall be pure as the Lord’s body! Whatever the body of Christ is now, our body is to be like it. We spoke of it last Sunday, you know, when we heard Him say, “Handle Me.” We are to have a real, corporeal body as He had, for substance and reality! And, like His body, it will be full of beauty, full of health and strength. It will enjoy peculiar immunities from evil and special adaptations for good. That is what is going to happen to me and to you! Therefore let us stand fast. Let us not willfully throw away our prospects of Glory and immortality. What? Relinquish resurrection? Relinquish Heaven? Relinquish likeness to the risen Lord? O God, save us from such a terrible piece of apostasy! Save us from such immeasurable folly! Suffer us not to turn our backs in the day of battle, since that would be to turn our backs from the crown of life that fades not away!  
Lastly, the Apostle urges us to stand fast because of our resources. Somebody may ask, “How can this body of ours be transformed and transfigured until it becomes like the body of Christ?” I cannot tell you anything about the process! It will all be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. But I can tell you by what power it will be accomplished. The Omnipotent Lord will lay bare His arm and exercise His might, “according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” O Brothers and Sisters, we may well stand fast since we have infinite power at our backs! The Lord is with us with all His energy, even with His all-conquering strength which shall yet subdue all His foes! Do not let us imagine that any enemy can be too strong for Christ’s arm. If He is able to subdue all things unto Himself, He can certainly bear us through all opposition. One glance of His eyes may wither all opposers, or, better still, one word from His lips may turn them into friends!  
The army of the Lord is strong in reserves. These reserves have never yet been fully called out. We, who are in the field, are only a small squadron holding the fort. But our Lord has at His back 10,000 times ten thousands who will carry war into the enemy’s camp! When the Captain of our salvation comes to the front, He will bring His heavenly legions with Him. Our business is to watch until He appears upon the scene, for when He comes, His infinite resources will be put in marching order!  
I like that speech of Wellington, (who was so calm amid the roar of Waterloo), when an officer sent word, “Tell the Commander-in-Chief that he must move me, I cannot hold my position any longer, my numbers are so thinned.” “Tell him,” said the great general, “he must hold his place! Every Englishman today must die where he stands, or else win the victory.” The officer read the command to stand and he did stand till the trumpet sounded victory! And so it is now. My Brothers and Sisters, we must die where we are rather than yield to the enemy! If Jesus tarries, we must not desert our posts. Wellington knew that the heads of the Prussian columns would soon be visible, coming in to ensure the victory—and so by faith we can perceive the legions of our Lord approaching—in serried ranks His angels fly through the opening Heaven! The air is teeming with them! I hear their silver trumpets. Behold, He comes with clouds! When He comes, He will abundantly recompense all who stood fast amid the rage of battle. Let us sing, “Hold the fort, for I am coming!”

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 672, 674, 670 AND, “HOLD THE FORT.”

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Sermon #2405 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Php 4.4

JOY, A DUTY  
NO. 2405

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 24, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 20, 1887.

**“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”** *Php 4:4*

THERE is a marvelous medicinal power in joy. Most medicines are distasteful, but this, which is the best of all medicines, is sweet to the taste and comforting to the heart. We noticed, in our reading, that there had been a little tiff between two sisters in the Church at Philippi—I am glad that we do not know what the quarrel was about. I am usually thankful for ignorance on such subjects—but, as a cure for disagreements, the Apostle says, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” People who are very happy, especially those who are very happy in the Lord, are not apt either to give offense or to take offense. Their minds are so sweetly occupied with higher things that they are not easily distracted by the little troubles which naturally arise among such imperfect creatures as we are. Joy in the Lord is the cure for all discord. Should it not be so? What is this joy but the concord of the soul, the accord of the heart, with the joy of Heaven? Joy in the Lord, then, drives away the discords of earth.

Further, Brothers and Sisters, notice that the Apostle, after he had said, “Rejoice in the Lord always,” commanded the Philippians to be careful for nothing, thus implying that joy in the Lord is one of the best preparations for the trials of this life. The cure for care is joy in the Lord! No, my Brother, you will not be able to keep on with your fretfulness. No, my Sister, you will not be able to weary yourself, any longer, with your anxieties if the Lord will but fill you with His joy! Then, being satisfied with your God, yes, more than satisfied, and overflowing with delight in Him, you will say to yourself, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance.”

What is there on earth that is worth fretting for, even, for five minutes? If one could gain an imperial crown by a day of care, it would be too great an expense for a thing which would bring more care with it. Therefore, let us be thankful, let us be joyful in the Lord. I count it one of the wisest things that, by rejoicing in the Lord, we commence our Heaven here below. It is possible to do so—it is profitable to do so—and we are commanded to do so!

Now I come to the text, itself, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.”  
I. It will be our first business at this time to consider THE GRACE COMMANDED, this Grace of joy. “Rejoice in the Lord,” says the Apostle.  
In the first place, this is a very delightful thing. What a gracious God we serve, who makes delight to be a duty and who commands us to rejoice! Should we not at once be obedient to such a command as this? It is intended that we should be happy. That is the meaning of the precept, that we should be cheerful—more than that, that we should be thankful! More than that, that we should rejoice! I think this word, “rejoice,” is almost a French word—it is not only joy, but it is joy over again, re-joice! You know re usually signifies the re-duplication of a thing, the taking of it over, again. We are to joy, and then we are to re-joy. We are to chew the cud of delight—we are to roll the dainty morsel under our tongue till we get the very essence out of it!  
“Rejoice.” Joy is a delightful thing. You cannot be too happy, Brothers and Sisters! No, do not suspect yourself of being wrong because you are full of delight. You know it is said of the Divine Wisdom, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Provided that it is joy in the Lord, you cannot have too much of it! The fly is drowned in the honey, or the sweet syrup into which he plunges himself, but this heavenly syrup of delight will not drown your soul or intoxicate your heart! It will do you good, not evil, all the days of your life. God never commanded us to do a thing which would harm us and, when He bids us rejoice, we may be sure that this is as delightful as it is safe, and as safe as it is delightful! Come, Brothers and Sisters, I am inviting you, now, to no distasteful duty when, in the name of my Master, I say to you, as Paul said to the Philippians under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”  
But, next, this is a demonstrative duty—“Rejoice in the Lord.” There may be such a thing as a dumb joy, but I hardly think that it can keep dumb long. Joy! Joy! Why, it speaks for itself! It is like a candle lighted in a dark chamber—you need not sound a trumpet and say, “Now light has come.” The candle proclaims itself by its own brilliance and, when joy comes into a man, it shines out of his eyes, it sparkles in his countenance! There is a something about every limb of the man that betokens that his body, like a well-tuned harp, has had its strings put in order! Joy—it refreshes the marrow of the bones, it quickens the flowing of the blood in the veins—it is a healthy thing in all respects. It is a speaking thing, a demonstrative thing and, I am sure that joy in the Lord ought to have a tongue! When the Lord sends you affliction, Sister, you generally grumble loudly enough. When the Lord tries you, my dear Brother, you generally speak fast enough about that.  
Now, when, on the other hand, the Lord multiplies His mercies to you, speak about it! Sing about it! I cannot remember, since I was a boy, ever seeing in the newspapers, columns of thankfulness and expressions of delight about the prosperity of business in England. It is a long, long time since I was first able to read newspapers—a great many years, now—but I do not remember the paragraphs in which it was said that everybody was getting on in the world and growing rich. But as soon as there was any depression in business, what gloomy articles appeared concerning the dreadful times which had fallen upon the agricultural interest and every other interest! Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, from the way some of you grumble, I might imagine you were all ruined if I did not know better! I knew some of you when you were not worth twopence—and you are pretty well-to-do now. You have got on uncommonly well for men who are being ruined! From the way some people talk, you might imagine that everybody is bankrupt and that we are all going to the dogs together! But it is not so and what a pity it is that we do not give the Lord some of our praises when we have better times! If we are so loud and so eloquent over our present woes, why could we not have been as eloquent and as loud in thanksgiving for the blessings that God formerly granted to us? Perhaps the mercies buried in oblivion have been to Heaven and accused us to the Lord and, therefore, He has sent us the sorrows of today. True joy, when it is joy in the Lord, must speak—it cannot hold its tongue—it must praise the name of the Lord!  
Further, this blessed Grace of joy is very contagious. It is a great privilege, I think, to meet a truly happy man, a graciously happy man. My mind goes back, at this moment, to that dear man of God who used to be with us, years ago, whom we called, “Old Father Dransfield.” What a lump of sunshine that man was! I think that I never came into this place with a heavy heart, but the very sight of him seemed to fill me with exhilaration, for his joy was wholly in his God! An old man and full of years, but as full of happiness as he was full of days! He was always having something to tell you to encourage you. He constantly made a discovery of some fresh mercy for which we were again to praise God! O dear Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice in the Lord that we may set others rejoicing! One dolorous spirit brings a kind of plague into the house—one person who is always wretched seems to stop all the birds singing wherever he goes! But, as the birds sing to each other and one morning songster quickens all the rest, and sets the groves ringing with harmony, so will it be with the happy cheerful spirit of a man who obeys the command of the text, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” This Grace of joy is contagious!  
Besides, dear Brothers and Sisters, joy in the Lord is influential for good. I am sure that there is a mighty influence wielded by a consistently joyous spirit. See how little children are affected by the presence of a happy person! There is much more in the tone of the life than there is in the particular fashion of the life. It may be the life of one who is very poor, but oh, how poverty is gilded by a cheerful spirit! It may be the life of one who is well read and deeply instructed, but, oh, if there is a beauty of holiness and a beauty of happiness added to the learning, nobody talks about “the blue stocking,” or, “the bookworm” being dull and heavy! Oh, no, there is a charm about holy joy! I wish we had more of it! There are many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar and there are many more sinners brought to Christ by happy Christians than by doleful Christians! Let us sing unto the Lord as long as we live and, perhaps some weary sinner who has discovered the emptiness of sinful pleasure, will say to himself, “Why, after all, there must be something real about the joy of these Christians! Let me go and learn how I may have it.” And when he comes and sees it in the light of your gladsome countenance, he will be likely to learn it, God helping him, so as never to forget it. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” says the Apostle, for joy is a most influential Grace, and every child of God ought to possess it in a high degree.  
I want you to notice, dear Friends, that this rejoicing is commanded. It is not a matter that is left to your option. It is not set before you as a desirable thing which you can do without—it is a positive precept of the Holy Spirit to all who are in the Lord—“Rejoice in the Lord always.” We ought to obey this precept because joy in the Lord makes us like God. He is the happy God—ineffable bliss is the atmosphere in which He lives and He would have His people to be happy. Let the devotees of Baal cut themselves with knives and lancets, and make hideous outcries if they will, but the servants of Jehovah must not even mar the corners of their beard! Even if they fast, they shall anoint their head and wash their face, that they appear not unto men to fast, for a joyous God desires a joyous people!  
You are commanded to rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, because this is for your profit. Holy joy will oil the wheels of your life’s machinery. Holy joy will strengthen you for your daily labor. Holy joy will beautify you and, as I have already said, give you an influence over the lives of others. It is upon this point that I would most of all insist—we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord. If you cannot speak the Gospel, live the Gospel by your cheerfulness, for what is the Gospel? Glad tidings of great joy and you who believe it must show, by its effect upon you, that it is glad tidings of great joy to you! I believe that a man of God—under trial and difficulty and affliction, bearing up, and patiently submitting with holy acquiescence, and still rejoicing in God—is a real preacher of the Gospel, preaching with an eloquence which is mightier than words can ever be and which will find its secret and silent way into the hearts of those who might have resisted other arguments! Oh, do, then, listen to the text, for it is a command from God—“Rejoice in the Lord always!”  
May I just pause, here, and hand this commandment round to all of you who are members of this Church, and to all of you who are truly members of Christ? You are bid to rejoice in the Lord always! You are not allowed to sit there and fret and fume! You are not permitted to complain and groan. Mourner, you are commanded to put on beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning! For this purpose your Savior came—the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him for this very end, that He might make you rejoice! Therefore, sing with the Prophet, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”  
II. Now we come to the second head, on which I will speak but briefly, that is, THE JOY DISCRIMINATED—“Rejoice in the Lord.”  
Notice the sphere of this joy. “Rejoice in the Lord.” We read in Scripture that children are to obey their parents “in the Lord.” We read of men and women being married “only in the Lord.” Now, dear Friends, no child of God must go outside that ring, “in the Lord.” There is where you are, where you ought to be, where you must be. You cannot truly rejoice if you get outside that ring and, therefore, see that you do nothing which you cannot do “in the Lord.” Mind that you seek no joy which is not joy in the Lord. If you go after the poisonous sweets of this world, woe be to you! Never rejoice in that which is sinful, for all such rejoicing is evil. Flee from it—it can do you no good. That joy which you cannot share with God is not a right joy for you. No! “In the Lord” is the sphere of your joy.  
But I think that the Apostle also means that God is to be the great Object of your joy. “Rejoice in the Lord.” Rejoice in the Father, your Father who is in Heaven, your loving, tender, unchangeable God! Rejoice, too, in the Son, your Redeemer, your Brother, the Husband of your soul, your Prophet, Priest and King! Rejoice, also, in the Holy Spirit, your Quickener, your Comforter, in Him who shall abide with you forever. Rejoice in the one God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—in Him delight yourselves, as it is written, “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” We cannot have too much of this joy in the Lord, for the great Jehovah is our exceeding joy! Or if, by, “the Lord,” is meant the Lord Jesus, then let me invite, persuade, command you to delight in the Lord Jesus, Incarnate in your flesh, dead for your sins, risen for your justification, gone into Glory claiming victory for you, sitting at the right hand of God interceding for you, reigning over all worlds on your behalf and soon to come to take you up into His Glory that you may be with Him forever! Rejoice in the Lord Jesus! This is a sea of delight—blessed are they that dive into its utmost depths!  
Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot rejoice in anything else, but you can rejoice in the Lord. Then rejoice in Him to the fullest. Do not rejoice in your temporal prosperity, for riches take to themselves wings and fly away. Do not rejoice, even, in your great successes in the work of God. Remember how the 70 disciples came back to Jesus and said, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name,” and He answered, “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.” Do not rejoice in your privileges—I mean, do not make the great joy of your life to be the fact that you are favored with this and that external privilege or ordinance—but rejoice in God! He changes not. If the Lord is your joy, your joy will never dry up! All other things are but for a season, but God is forever and ever. Make Him your joy, the whole of your joy, and then let this joy absorb your every thought! Be baptized into this joy! Plunge into the deeps of this unutterable bliss of joy in God!  
III. Thirdly, let us think of THE TIME APPOINTED for this rejoicing— “Rejoice in the Lord always.”  
“Always.” Well, then, that begins at once, certainly. So let us now begin to rejoice in the Lord. If any of you have taken a gloomy view of religion, I beseech you to throw that gloomy view away at once. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” therefore, rejoice in the Lord now! I recollect what a damper I had, as a young Christian, when I had but lately believed in Jesus Christ. I felt that, as the Lord had said, “He that believes in Me has everlasting life,” I, having believed in Him, had everlasting life and I said so, with the greatest joy and delight and enthusiasm, to an old Christian man. And he said to me, “Beware of presumption! There are a great many who think they have eternal life, but who have not got it.” That was quite true, but, for all that, is there not more presumption in doubting God’s promise than there is in believing it?  
Is there any presumption in taking God at His Word? Is there not gross presumption in hesitating and questioning as to whether these things are so or not? If God says that they are so, then they are so, whether I feel that they are so or not—and it is my place, as a Believer— to accept God’s bare Word and rest on it. “We count checks as cash,” said one who was making up accounts. Good checks are to be counted as cash and the promises of God, though as yet unfulfilled, are as good as the blessings, themselves, for God cannot lie, or make a promise that He will not perform! Let us, therefore, not be afraid of being glad, but begin to be glad, at once, if we have, up to now, taken a gloomy view of true religion and have been afraid to rejoice.  
When are we to be glad? “Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, when you cannot rejoice in anything or anyone but God. When the fig tree does not blossom, when there is no fruit on the vine and no herd in the stall. When everything withers and decays and perishes. When the worm at the root of the gourd has made it die, then rejoice in the Lord! When the day darkens into evening and the evening into midnight—and the midnight into a sevenfold horror of great darkness—rejoice in the Lord! And when that darkness does not clear, but becomes more dense and Egyptian. When night succeeds night and neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, still rejoice in the Lord always! He who uttered these words had been a night and a day in the deep. He had been stoned, he had suffered from false brethren. He had been in peril of his life and yet, most fittingly do those lips cry out to us, “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Yes, at the stake, itself, martyrs have fulfilled this Word of God—they clapped their hands amid the fire that was consuming them! Therefore, rejoice in the Lord when you cannot rejoice in any other.  
But also take care that you rejoice in the Lord when you have other things to rejoice in. When He loads your table with good things and your cup is overflowing with blessings, rejoice in Him more than in them. Forget not that the Lord, your Shepherd, is better than the green pastures and the still waters—rejoice not in the pastures or in the waters in comparison with your joy in the Shepherd who gives you all! Let us never make gods out of our goods! Let us never allow what God gives us to supplant the Giver. Shall the wife love the jewels that her husband gave her more than she loves him who gave them to her? That were an evil love, or no love at all! So, let us love God, first, and rejoice in the Lord always when the day is brightest and multiplied are the other joys that He permits us to have.  
“Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, if you have not rejoiced before, begin to do so at once. And when you have long rejoiced, keep on at it. I have known, sometimes, that things have gone so smoothly that I have said, “There will be a check to this prosperity! I know that there will. Things cannot go on quite so pleasantly always.”—

*“More the treacherous calm I dread  
Than tempests lowering overhead.”*

One is apt to spoil his joy by the apprehension that there is some evil coming. Now listen to this—“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Do not anticipate trouble. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Take the good that God provides you and rejoice not merely in it, but in Him who provided it. So may you enjoy it without fear, for there is good salt with that food which is eaten as coming from the hand of God.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, when you get into company, then rejoice in the Lord. Do not be ashamed to let others see that you are glad. Rejoice in the Lord, also, when you are alone. I know what happens to some of you on Sunday night. You have had such a blessed Sabbath and you have gone away from the Lord’s Table with the very flavor of Heaven in your mouths! And then some of you have had to go home where everything is against you. The husband does not receive you with any sympathy with your joy, or the father does not welcome you with any fellowship in your delight. Well, but still, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” When you cannot get anybody else to rejoice with you, still continue to rejoice! There is a way of looking at everything which will show you that the blackest cloud has a silver lining. There is a way of looking at all things in the Light of God which will turn into sweetness that which otherwise had been bitter as gall!

I do not know whether any of you keep a quassia cup at home. If you do, you know that it is made of wood, and you pour water into the bowl and the water turns bitter, directly, before you drink it. You may keep this cup as long as you like, but it always embitters the water that is put into it. I think that I know some dear Brothers and Sisters who always seem to have one of these cups handy. Now, instead of that, I want you to buy a cup of another kind that shall make everything sweet, whatever it is! Whatever God pleases to pour out of the bowl of Providence shall come into your cup and your contentment, your delight in God, shall sweeten it all! God bless you, dear Friends, with much of this holy joy!

IV. So now I finish with the fourth head, which is this, THE EMPHASIS LAID ON THE COMMAND—“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” What does that mean, “Again I say, Rejoice”?

This was, first, to show Paul’s love for the Philippians. He wanted them to be happy. They had been so kind to him and they had made him so happy, that he said, “Oh, dear Brothers, do rejoice! Dear Sisters, do rejoice! I say it twice over to you, ‘Be happy, be happy,’ because I love you so much that I am anxious to have you, beyond all things else, rejoice in the Lord always.”

I also think that, perhaps, he said it twice over to suggest the difficulty of continual joy. It is not so easy as some think to always rejoice. It may be for you young people, who are yet strong in limb, who have few aches and pains and none of the infirmities of life. It may be an easy thing to those placed in easy circumstances, with few cares and difficulties. But there are some of God’s people who need great Grace if they are to rejoice in the Lord always. And the Apostle knew that, so he said, “Again I say, Rejoice.” He repeats the precept, as much as to say, “I know it is a difficult thing and so I the more earnestly press it upon you. Again I say, Rejoice.”

I think, too, that he said it twice over, to assert the possibility of it. This was as much as if he had said, “I told you to rejoice in the Lord always. You opened your eyes and looked with astonishment upon me, but, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ It is possible, it is practicable! I have not spoken unwisely. I have not told you to do what you never can do, but with deliberation I write it down, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ You can be happy! God the Holy Spirit can lift you above the doldrums of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil—and you may be enabled to live upon the mountain of God beneath the shinings of His face! ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’”

Do you not think that this was intended, also, to impress upon them the importance of the duty? “Again I say, Rejoice.” Some of you will go and say, “I do not think that it matters much whether I am happy or not. I shall get to Heaven, however gloomy I am, if I am sincere.” “No,” says Paul, “that kind of talk will not do! I cannot have you speak like that. Come, I must have you rejoice! I really conceive it to be a Christian’s bounden duty and so, ‘Again, I say, Rejoice.’”

But do you not think, also, that Paul repeated the command to allow for special personal testimony? “Again, I say, Rejoice. I, Paul, a sufferer to the utmost extent for Christ’s sake, even now an ambassador in bonds, shut up in a dungeon—I say to you, Rejoice.” Paul was a greatly-tried man, but he was a blessedly happy man. There is not one of us but would gladly change conditions with Paul, if that were possible, now that we see the whole of his life written out. And tonight, looking across the ages, over all the scenes of trouble which he encountered, he says to us, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Did you ever notice how full of joy this Epistle to the Philippians is? Will you spare me just a minute while I get you to run your eyes through it to observe what a joyful letter it is? You notice that, in the first chapter, Paul gets only as far as the fourth verse when he says, “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Now he is in his right vein! He is so glad because of what God has done for the Philippians that when he prays for them, he mixes joy with his prayer! In the 16th verse he declares that he found joy, even, in the opposition of those who preached Christ in order to rival him. Hear what he says—“The one preaches Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”

And he does not finish the chapter till, in the 25th verse, he declares that he had joy, even, in the expectation of not going to Heaven just yet, but living a little longer to do good to these people—“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” You see it is joy, joy, joy, joy! Paul seems to go from rung to rung of the ladder of the Light of God, as if he were climbing up from Nero’s dungeon into Heaven, itself, by way of continual joy! So he writes, in the second verse of the second chapter, “Fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” When he gets to the 16th verse, he says, “That I may rejoice in the Day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.”

But I am afraid that I should weary you if I went through the Epistle thus, slowly, verse by verse. Just notice how he begins the third chapter—“Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord.” The word is sometimes rendered “farewell.” When he says, “Rejoice,” it is the counterpart of, “welcome.” We say to a man who comes to our house, “Salve”—“Welcome.” When he goes away, it is our duty to “speed the parting guest” and say, “Farewell.” This is what Paul meant to say here. “Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well in the Lord. Be happy in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord.” And I do not think that I can finish up my sermon better than by saying on this Sabbath night, “Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well, be happy in the Lord.”—

*“Fare you well! And if forever,  
Still forever, fare you well.”*

May that be your position, to so walk with God that your fare shall be that of angels! May you eat angels’ food, the manna of God’s love! May your drink be from the Rock that flows with a pure stream! So may you feed and so may you drink until you come unto the mountain of God, where you shall see His face unveiled and, standing in His exceeding brightness, shall know His Glory, being glorified with the saved! Till then, be happy. Why, even—

*“The thought of such amazing bliss,*

*Should constant joys create.”*  
Be happy! If the present is dreary, it will soon be over. Oh, but a little while and we shall be transferred from these seats below to the thrones above! We shall go from the place of aching brows to the place where they all wear crowns! From the place of weary hands to where they bear the palm branch of victory! From the place of mistake and error and sin, and consequent grief, to the place where they are without fault before the Throne of God, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Come, then, let us make a solemn league and covenant together in the name of God, and let it be called, “The Guild of the Happy,” for the— *“Favorites of the Heavenly King  
May speak their joys abroad.”*

No, they must speak their joys abroad! Let us endeavor to do so, always, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen and Amen!  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**Philippians 4.**

This Epistle was written by Paul when he was in prison with iron fetters about his wrists, yet there is no iron in the Epistle. It is full of light, life, love and joy—blended with traces of sorrow—yet with a holy delight that rises above his grief.

Verse 1. Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. See how the heart of the Apostle is at work! His emotions are not dried up by his personal griefs. He takes a delight in his friends at Philippi! He has a lively recollection of the time when he and Silas were shut up in prison, there, and that same night baptized the jailor and his household—and formed the Church at Philippi!

*2.*I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. These two good women had fallen out with one another. Paul loves them so much that he would not have any strife in the Church to mar its harmony and he, therefore, beseeches both of these good women to end their quarrel, and to, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” You cannot tell what hurt may come to a Church through two members being at enmity against each other. They may be unknown persons. They may be Christian women, but they can work no end of mischief and, therefore, it is a most desirable thing that they should speedily come together, again, in peace and unity.

*3.*And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life. He tenderly thinks of all those who had helped the work of the Lord and, in return, he would have all of them helped, and kindly remembered, and affectionately cherished. May we always have this tender feeling towards one another— especially towards those who work for the Lord with us! May we always delight in cheering those who serve our Lord!

*4, 5.*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. We have come to understand this word, “moderation,” in a sense not at all intended here. The best translation would probably be, “forbearance.” Do not get angry with anybody. Do not begin to get fiery and impetuous—be forbearing, for the Lord is at hand. You cannot tell how soon He may appear. There is no time to spare for the indulgence of anger. Be quiet. Be patient and if there is anything very wrong, well, leave it. Our Lord Jesus will come very soon, therefore be not impatient.

*6.*Be careful—That is, be anxious—  
*6.*For nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. See how the Apostle would bid us throw anxiety to the winds—let us try to do so. You cannot turn one hair white or black, fret as you may. You cannot add a cubit to your stature, be you as anxious as you please. It will be for your own advantage and it will be for God’s Glory for you to shake off the anxieties which otherwise might overshadow your spirit. Be anxious about nothing, but prayerful about everything—and be thankful about everything as well! Is not that a beautiful trait in Paul’s character? He is a prisoner at Rome and likely soon to die—yet he mingles thanksgiving with his supplication and asks others to do the same! We have always something for which to thank God, therefore let us also obey the Apostolic injunction.

*7, 8.*And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, Brothers and Sisters, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. If there is any really good movement in the world, help it, you Christian people! If it is not purely and absolutely religious, yet if it tends to the benefit of your fellow men, if it promotes honesty, justice, purity, take care that you are on that side and do all you can to help it forward.

*9.*Those things, which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do. Paul was a grand preacher to be able to say that—to hold up his own example, as well as his own teaching as a thing which the people might safely follow!

*9.*And the God of peace shall be with you. In the seventh verse, we had the expression, “the peace of God.” In this ninth verse, we have the mention of, “the God of peace.” May we first enjoy the peace of God and then be helped by the Spirit of God to get into a still higher region where we shall be more fully acquainted with the God of peace!

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity. “I rejoiced.” So Paul was, himself, in a happy mood! These saints in Philippi had sent to him in prison a gift by the hand of one of their pastors, and Paul, in his deep poverty, had been much comforted by their kind thoughtfulness about him.

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. That was not an easy lesson to learn, especially when one of those states meant being in prison at Rome. If he was ever in the Mammertine, those of us who have been in that dungeon would confess that it would take a deal of Grace to make us content to be there! And if he was shut up in the prison of the Palatine Hill, in the barracks near the morass, it was, to say the least, not a desirable place to be. A soldier chained to your hand day and night, however good a fellow he may be, does not always make the most delightful company for you, nor you for him—and it takes some time to learn to be content with such a companion. But, says Paul, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. These are both hard lessons to learn. I do not know which is the more difficult of the two. Probably it is easier to know how to go down than to know how to go up. How many Christians have I seen grandly glorifying God in sickness and poverty when they have come down in the world, and ah, how often have I seen other Christians dishonoring God when they have grown rich, or when they have risen to a position of influence among their fellow men! These two lessons, Grace, alone, can fully teach us.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. What a gracious attainment! There is no boasting in this declaration. Paul only spoke what was literally the truth.

14, 15. Notwithstanding you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only. The Philippians were the only Christians who had sent any help to this great sufferer for Christ’s sake in the time of his need.

16-18. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. I do not suppose that they sent him very much, but he knew the love that prompted the gift— he understood what they meant by it. I always had a fancy that Lydia was the first to suggest that kind deed. She, the first convert of the Philippian Church, thought of Paul, I doubt not, and said to the other Believers, “Let us take care of him as far as we can. See how he spends his whole life in the Master’s service, and now he may, at last, die in prison for lack of even common necessities. Let us send a present to him in Rome.” How grateful is the Apostle for that gift of love! What gladness they had put into his heart! Now he says—

19. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. “You have supplied my need out of your poverty. My God shall supply all your need out of His riches. Your greatest need shall not exceed the liberality of His supplies.”

20, 21. Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The religion of Christ is full of courtesy and it is full of generous thoughtfulness. I do not think that he can be a Christian who has no knowledge nor care about his fellow Church members.

21. The Brothers and Sisters which are with me greet you. They saw that he was writing a letter and they, therefore, said, “Send our love to the Philippians.”

2. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. Only think of saints in the household of Nero, saints in the service of such a demon as he was, and saints who were first in every good thing! “Chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

*23.*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 720, 870.  
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÷Php 4.6

PRAYER PERFUMED WITH PRAISE  
NO. 1469

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 20, 1879, BY C. H, SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”***Php 4:6***.**

ACCORDING to the text we are, both by prayer and supplication, to make known our requests unto God. If any distinction is intended here, I suppose that by prayer is meant the general act of devotion and the mention of our usual needs. And by supplication I think would be intended our distinct entreaties and special petitions. We are to offer the general prayer common to all the saints and we are to add the special and definite petitions which are peculiar to ourselves. We are to worship in prayer, for God is to be adored by all His saints, and then we are to beseech His favors for ourselves according to the words of the text, letting our requests be made known unto God.

Do not forget this second form of worship. There is a good deal of generalizing in prayer and, God forbid that we should say a word against it, so far as it is sincere worship. But we need to have more of specific, definite pleading with God, asking Him for such-and-such things with a clear knowledge of what we ask. You will hear prayers at Prayer Meetings in which everything is asked in general but nothing in particular and yet the reality and heartiness of prayer will often be best manifested by the putting up of requests for distinct blessings.

See how Abraham, when he went to worship the Lord, did not merely adore Him and in general pray for His Glory, but on a special occasion he pleaded concerning the promised heir. At another time he cried, “O that Ishmael might live before You,” and on one special occasion he interceded for Sodom. Elijah, when on the top of Carmel, did not pray for all the blessings of Providence in general, but for rain, for rain then and there. He knew what he was driving at, kept to his point and prevailed.

So, my beloved Friends, we have many needs which are so pressing as to be very distinct and definite and we ought to have just as many clearly defined petitions which we offer to God by way of supplication and for the Divine answers to these we are bound to watch with eager expectancy so that when we receive them we may magnify the Lord. The point to which I would draw your attention is this—whether it is the general prayer or the specific supplication—we are to offer either or both, “with thanksgiving.” We are to pray about everything and with every prayer we must blend our thanksgivings.

Therefore it follows that we ought always to be in a thankful condition of heart since we are to pray without ceasing and are not to pray without thanksgiving! It is clear that we ought to be always ready to give thanks unto the Lord. We must say with the Psalmist, “Thus will I bless You while I live, I will lift up my hands in Your name.” The constant tenor and spirit of our lives should be adoring gratitude, love, reverence and thanksgiving

to the Most High. This blending of thanks with devotion is always to be maintained.

Always must we offer prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. No matter though the prayer should struggle upward out of the depths, yet must its wings be silvered over with thanksgiving. Though the prayer were offered upon the verge of death, yet in the last few words which the trembling lips can utter there should be notes of gratitude as well as words of petition. The Law says, “With all your sacrifices you shall offer salt,” and the Gospel says with all your prayers you shall offer praise. “One thing at a time” is said to be a wise proverb, but for once I must venture to contradict it and say that two things at a time are better when the two are prayer and thanksgiving.

These two holy streams flow from one common source—the Spirit of Life which dwells within us—and they are utterances of the same holy fellowship with God. Therefore it is right that they should mingle as they flow and find expression in the same holy exercise. Supplication and thanksgiving so naturally run into each other that it would be difficult to keep them separate! Like kindred colors, they shade off into each other. Our very language seems to indicate this, for there is small difference between the words, “to pray,” and, “to praise.”

A Psalm may be either prayer or praise, or both, and there is yet another form of utterance which is certainly prayer, but is used as praise and is really both. I refer to that joyous Hebrew word which has been imported into all Christian languages, “Hosanna.” Is it a prayer? Yes. “Save, Lord.” Is it not praise? Yes, for it is tantamount to, “God save the King,” and it is used to extol the Son of David. While we are here on earth we should never attempt to make such a distinction between prayer and praise that we should either praise without prayer or pray without praise—but with every prayer and supplication we should mingle thanksgiving and thus make known our requests unto God.

This commingling of precious things is admirable. It reminds me of that verse in the Canticles where the king is described as coming up from the wilderness in his chariot, “like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant.” There is the myrrh of prayer and the frankincense of praise! So, too, the holy incense of the sanctuary yielded the smoke of prayer which filled the Holy Place, but with it there was the sweet perfume of choice spices which may be compared to praise.

Prayer and praise are like the two cherubim on the ark—they must never be separated. In the model of prayer which our Savior has given us, saying, “After this manner pray you,” the opening part of it is rather praise than prayer—“Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name,” and the closing part of it is praise where we say, “For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.” David, who is the great tutor and exemplar of the Church as to her worship, being at once her poet and her preacher, takes care in almost every Psalm, though the petition may be agonizing, to mingle exquisite praise.

Take, for instance, that Psalm of his after his great sin with Bathsheba. There, one would think, with sighs and groans and tears so multiplied, he might have almost forgotten or have feared to offer thanksgiving while he was trembling under a sense of wrath! And yet before the Psalm that begins, “Have mercy upon me, O God,” can come to a conclusion, the Psalmist has said, “O Lord, open You my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise,” and he cannot pen the last word without beseeching the Lord to build the walls of Jerusalem, adding the promise, “then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.”

I need not stop to quote other instances, but it is almost always the case that David, by the fire of prayer, warms himself into praise. He begins low, with many a broken note of complaining, but he mounts and glows and, like the lark, sings as he ascends! When at first his harp is muffled, he warbles a few mournful notes and becomes excited till he cannot restrain his hand from that well-known and accustomed string which he had reserved alone for the music of praise. There is a passage in the 18th Psalm, at the third verse, in which, indeed, he seems to have caught the very idea which I need to fix upon your minds this morning—“I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies.”

He was in such a condition that he says, “The sorrows of death compassed me and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of Hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” Driven by distress, he declares that he will call upon the Lord, that is, with utterances of prayer. But he does not only regard his God as the object of prayer, but as One who is to be praised. “I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised” and then, as if inspired to inform us of the fact that the blending of thanksgiving with prayer renders it Infallibly effectual, as I shall have to show you it does, he adds, “So shall I be saved from my enemies.”

Now, if this habit of combining thanksgiving with prayer is found in the Old Testament saints, we have a right to expect it yet more in New Testament Believers who, in clearer light, perceive fresh reasons for thanksgiving. But I shall give you no instance except that of the writer of my text. Does he not tell us in the present chapter that those things which we have seen in him we are to do, for his life was agreeable with his teaching? Now, observe how frequently he commences his Epistles with a blending of supplication and thanksgiving. Turn to Romans and note in the first chapter, at the eighth and ninth verses, this fusion of the precious metals—“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.”

There is, “I thank my God” and, “I make mention of you always in my prayers.” This was not written with a special eye to the precept of our text—it was natural to Paul so to thank God when he prayed! Look at the Epistle to the Colossians, in the first chapter, at the third verse, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” To the same effect we read in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter one, verse two—“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.” Look also at Second Timothy, 1:3—“I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that

without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.”

And if it is so in other Epistles, we are not at all surprised to find it so in the Philippian Epistle itself, for so we read when we turn to its first chapter, at the third and fourth verses—“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Nor need I confine you to the language of Paul’s Epistle, since it is most noteworthy that in Philippi, (and those to whom he wrote must have remembered the incident), Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God at midnight, so that the prisoners heard them. It is clear that Paul habitually practiced what he here enjoins. His own prayers had not been offered without thanksgiving—what God has joined together he had never put asunder!

With this as a preface, I invite you to consider, carefully and prayerfully, first, the grounds of thanksgiving in prayer. Secondly, the evil of its absence and, thirdly, the result of its presence.

I. First, then, there are REASONS FOR MINGLING THANKSGIVING WITH PRAYER. In the nature of things it ought to be so. We have abundant cause, my Brethren, for thanksgiving at all times. We do not come to God in prayer as if He had left us absolutely penniless and we cried to Him like starving prisoners begging through prison bars. We do not ask as if we had never received a single farthing from God before and hardly thought we should obtain anything now. But on the contrary, having been already the recipients of immense favors, we come to a God who abounds in loving kindness, who is willing to bestow good gifts upon us and waits to be gracious to us.

We do not come to the Lord as slaves to an unfeeling tyrant craving for a gift, but as children who draw near to a loving father, expecting to receive abundantly from his liberal hands. Thanksgiving is the right spirit in which to come before the God who daily loads us with benefits. Think for a while what cause you have for thanksgiving in prayer. And first you have this, that such a thing as prayer is possible—that a finite creature can speak with the infinite Creator—that a sinful being can have audience with the thrice holy Jehovah! It is worthy of thanksgiving that God should have commanded prayer and encouraged us to draw near unto Him and that, moreover, He should have supplied all things necessary to the sacred exercise. He has set up a Mercy Seat, sprinkled blood and He has prepared a High Priest, always living to make intercession. And to these He has added the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities and to teach us what we should pray for as we ought.

Everything is ready and God waits for us to enquire at His hands! He has not only set before us an open door and invited us to enter, but He has given us the right spirit with which to approach. The Grace of supplication is poured out upon us and worked in us by the Holy Spirit. What a blessing it is that we do not attempt prayer with a, “perhaps,” as if we were making a doubtful experiment! Nor do we come before God as a forlorn hope, desperately afraid that He will not listen to our cry. But He has ordained prayer to be the ordinary commerce of Heaven and earth and sanctioned it in the most solemn manner. Prayer may climb to Heaven, for God has Himself prepared the ladder and set it down just by the head of His lonely Jacob so that though that head is pillowed on a stone, it may rest in peace.

Lo, at the top of that ladder is the Lord Himself in His Covenant capacity, receiving our petitions and sending His attendant angels with answers to our requests! Shall we not bless God for this? Let us praise His name, dear Friends, especially that you and I are still spared to pray and permitted to pray. What if we are greatly afflicted, yet it is of the Lord’s mercy that we are not consumed! If we had received our just deserts we should not now have been on praying ground and pleading terms with Him. But let it be for our comfort and to God’s praise that we may still stand with bowed head and cry, each one, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!”

Still we may cry like sinking Peter, “Lord save, or I perish!” Like David, we may be unable to go up to the temple, but we can still go to our God in prayer! The prodigal has lost his substance, but he has not lost his power to supplicate! He has been feeding swine, but as yet he is still a man and has not lost the faculty of desire and entreaty. He may have forgotten his Father, but his Father has not forgotten him. He may arise and he may go to Him and he may pour out his soul in His Father’s bosom. Therefore, let us give thanks unto God that He has nowhere said unto us, “Seek you My face in vain.”

If we find a trembling desire to pray within our soul and if, though almost extinct, we feel some hope in the promise of our gracious God—if our heart still groans after holiness and after God though she has lost her power to pray with joyful confidence as once she did—yet let us be thankful that we can pray even if it is but a little! In the will and power to pray there lies the capacity for infinite blessedness—he who has the key of prayer can open Heaven—yes, he has access to the heart of God! Therefore, let us bless God for prayer.

And then, Beloved, beyond the fact of prayer and our power to exercise it, there is a further ground of thanksgiving in that we have already received great mercy at God’s hands. We are not coming to God to ask favors and receive them for the first time in our lives. Why, blessed be His name, if He never granted me another favor, I have enough for which to thank Him as long as I have any being! And this, moreover, is to be remembered—whatever great things we are about to ask, we cannot possibly be seeking for blessings one-half so great as those which we have already received if we are, indeed, His children!

If you are a Christian, you have life in Christ! Are you about to ask for meat and raiment? That life is more than these. You have already obtained Christ Jesus to be yours, then He that spared Him not will deny you nothing! Is there, I was about to say, anything to compare with the infinite riches which are already ours in Christ Jesus? Let us perpetually thank our Benefactor for what we have while we make requests for something more. Should it not be so? Shall not the abundant utterances of the memory of His great goodness run over into our requests till our petitions are baptized in gratitude? While we come before God, in one aspect, empty handed to receive of His goodness, on the other hand we should never appear before Him empty, but come with the fat of our sacrifices offering praise and glorifying God.  
Furthermore, there is this to be remembered, that when we come before God in the hour of trouble, remembering His great goodness to us in the past and, therefore, thanking Him, we ought to have faith enough to believe that the present trouble, about which we are praying, is sent in love. You will win with God in prayer if you can look at your trials in this light—“Lord, I have this thorn in the flesh. I beseech You, deliver me from it, but meanwhile I bless You for it, for though I do not understand the why or the wherefore of it, I am persuaded there is Your love within it. Therefore, while I ask You to remove it, so far as it seems evil to me, yet wherein it may to Your better knowledge work my good, I bless You for it and I am content to endure it so long as You see fit.” Is not that a sweet way of praying?

“Lord, I am in need, be pleased to supply me but, meanwhile, if You do not, I believe it is better for me to be in need, and so I praise You for my necessity while I ask You to supply it. I glory in my infirmity, even while I ask You to overcome it. I triumph before You in my affliction and bless You for it even while I ask You to help me in it and to rescue me out of it.” This is a royal way of praying—such a mixture of prayer and thanksgiving is more precious than the gold of Ophir! Furthermore, Beloved, whenever we are on our knees in prayer, it becomes us to bless God that prayer has been answered so many times before. “Here Your poor petitioner bends before You to ask again, but before he asks he thanks You for having heard him so many times before. I know that You always hear me, therefore do I continue to cry to You. My thanksgivings urge me to make fresh petitions, encouraging me in the full confidence that You will not send me away empty.”

Why, many of the mercies which you possess today and rejoice in, are answers to prayer! They are dear to you because, like Samuel, whom his mother so named because he was, “asked of God,” they came to you as answers to your supplications! When mercies come in answer to prayer they have a double delight about them, not only because they are good in themselves, but because they are certificates of our favor with the Lord. Well, then, as God has heard us so often and we have the proofs of His hearing, should we ever pray with murmurings and complaints? Should we not rather feel an intense delight when we approach the Throne of Grace—rapture awakened by sunny memories of the past?

Again, we ought to pray with thanksgiving in its highest of all senses by thanking God that we have the mercy which we seek. I wish we could learn this high virtue of faith. When I was conversing lately with our dear friend George Muller, he frequently astonished me with the way in which he mentioned that he had for so many months and years asked for suchand-such a mercy and praised the Lord for it. He praised the Lord for it as though he had actually obtained it. Even in praying for the conversion of a person, as soon as he had began to intercede he began, also, to praise God for the conversion of that person! Though I think he told us he had in one instance already prayed for 30 years and the work was not yet done, yet all the while he had gone on thanking God because he knew the prayer would be answered! He believed that he had his petition and commenced to magnify the Giver of it.

Is this unreasonable? How often do we antedate our gratitude among the sons of men? If you were to promise some poor person that you would pay his rent when it came due, he would thank you directly, though not a farthing had left your pocket! We have enough faith in our fellow men to thank them beforehand—surely we may do the same with our Lord! Shall we not be willing to trust God for a few months ahead? Yes, and for years beforehand if His wisdom bids us wait. This is the way to win with Him! When you pray, believe that you receive the gifts you ask and you shall have them! “Believe that you have it,” says the Scripture, “and you shall have it.”

As a man’s note of hand stands for the money, so let God’s promise be accounted as the performance! Shall not Heaven’s bank notes pass as cash? Yes, verily, they shall have unquestioned currency among Believers! We will bless the Lord for giving us what we have sought, since our having it is a matter of absolute certainty! We shall never thank God in faith and then find that we were fooled—He has said, “All things whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive.” And therefore we may rest assured that the thanksgiving of faith shall never bring shame into the face of the man who offers it.

Once again, and then I will say no more upon these grounds of thanksgiving. Surely, Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord does not answer the prayer which we are offering, yet still He is so good, so supremely good, that we will bless Him whether or not. We ought even to praise Him when He does not answer us, yes, and bless Him for refusing our desires. How devoutly might some of us thank Him that He did not answer our prayers when we sought for evil things in the ignorance of our childish minds! We asked for flesh and He might have sent us quails in His anger—and while the flesh was yet in our mouths His wrath might have come upon us—but in love He would not hear us. Blessed be His name for closing His ears in pity!

Let us adore Him when He keeps us waiting at His doors. Let us thank Him for rebuffs and bless Him for refusals, believing always that Ralph Erskine spoke the truth when he said—

*“I’m heard when answered soon or late,  
Yes, heard when I no answer get.  
Yes, kindly answered when refused,  
And treated well when harshly used.”*

Faith glorifies the love of God, for she knows that the Lord’s roughest usage is only love in disguise! We are not so sordid as to make our songs depend upon the weather, or on the fullness of the olive press and the wine vat. Blessed be His name, He must be right even when He seems at cross purposes with His people! We are not going to quarrel with Him or awake silly babes with their nurses because He does not happen to grant us every desire of our foolish hearts. Though He slays us, we will trust in Him, much more if He decline our requests!

We ask Him for our daily bread and if He withholds it, we will praise Him. Our praises are not dependent upon His answers to our prayers. If the labor of the olive should fail and the field should yield no fruit. If the flocks should be cut off from the fold and the herd from the stall, yet still would we rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of our salvation! Blessed

Spirit, raise us to this state of Grace and keep us there! Of that which we have spoken this is the sum—under every condition and in every necessity, draw near to God in prayer, but always bring thanksgiving with you. As Joseph said to his brothers, “You shall not see my face unless your younger brother is with you,” so may the Lord say to you, “You shall not receive My smile unless you bring thankfulness with you.”

Let your prayers be like those ancient missals which one sometimes sees in which the initial letters of the prayers are gilded and adorned with a profusion of colors, the work of cunning writers. Let even the general confession of sin and the litany of mournful petitions have at least one illuminated letter! Illuminate your prayers! Light them up with rays of thanksgiving all the way through! And when you come together to pray, forget not to make melody unto the Lord with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

II. Secondly, I shall drive at the same point while I try to show THE EVIL OF THE ABSENCE OF THANKSGIVING in our prayers. First and foremost we would be chargeable with ingratitude. Are we to be always receiving and never to return thanks? Aristotle rightly observes, “a return is required to preserve friendship between two persons,” and as we have nothing else to give to God except gratitude, let us abound in it! If we have no fruit of the field, let us at least render to Him the fruit of our lips. Have you no thanks to bring? How, then, can you expect further favors? Does not liberality, itself, close its hand when ingratitude stands in the way? What? Never a word of gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow! Then may even the ungodly despise you!

Next, it would argue great selfishness if we did not combine praise with prayer. Can it be right to think only of ourselves—to pray for benefits and never honor our Benefactor? Are we going to import the detestable vice of avarice into spiritual things and only care for our own soul’s good? What? No thought for God’s Glory! No idea of magnifying His great and blessed name! God forbid that we should fall into a spirit so mean and narrow! Healthy praise and thanksgiving must be cultivated because they prevent prayer from becoming overgrown with the mildew of selfishness. Thanksgiving also prevents prayer from becoming an exhibition of the lack of faith, for, indeed, some prayer is rather a manifestation of the absence of faith than the exercise of confidence in God.

If when I am in trouble I still bless the Lord for all I suffer, my faith is seen. If before I obtain the mercy, I thank God for the Grace which I have not yet tasted, my faith is manifest. What? Is our faith such that it only sings in the sunshine? Have we no nightingale music for our God? Is our trust like the swallow which must leave us in winter? Is our faith a flower which needs the conservatory to keep it alive? Can it not blossom like the flower at the foot of the frozen glacier where the damp and chill of adversity surround it? I trust it can! It ought to do so and we ought to feel that we can praise and bless God when outward circumstances appear rather to demand sighs than songs. Not to thank God in our prayers would argue willfulness and lack of submission to His will. Must everything be ordered according to our mind? To refuse to praise unless we have our own way is great presumption and shows that like a naughty child we will sulk if we cannot be master.  
I might illustrate the willfulness of many a supplication by that of a little boy who was very diligent in saying his prayers, but was, at the same time, disobedient, ill-tempered and the pest of the house. His mother told him that she thought it was mere hypocrisy for him to pretend to pray. He replied, “No, Mother, indeed it is not, for I pray God to lead you and Father to like my ways better than you do.” Numbers of people want the Lord to like their ways better, but they do not intend to follow the ways of the Lord! Their minds are contrary to God and will not submit to His will and, therefore, there is no thanksgiving in them. Praise in a prayer is indicative of a humble, submissive, obedient spirit—and when it is absent we may suspect willfulness and self-seeking.

Very much of the prayer of rebellious hearts is the mere growling of an angry obstinacy, the whine of an ungratified self-conceit. God must do this and He must do that, or else we will not love Him. What baby talk! What spoiled children such are! A little whipping will do them good. “I have never believed in the goodness of God,” said one, “ever since He took my dear mother away.” I knew a good man whose child was on the verge of the grave. When I went to see her, he charged me not to mention death to her, “For,” he said, “I do not believe God could do such an unkind action as take my only child away.” When I assured him that she would surely die within a few days and that he must not quarrel with the will of the Lord, he stood firm in his rebellion.

He prayed, but he could not bless God and it was no marvel that his heart sank within him and he refused to be comforted when, at last, his child died, as we all felt sure she would. He became afterwards resigned, but his lack of acquiescence cost him many a smart. This will not do! This quarrelling with God is poor work! Resignation comes to the heart like an angel unawares and when we entertain it, our soul is comforted. We may ask for the child’s life, but we must also thank the Lord that the dear life has been prolonged so long as it has been—and we must put the child and everything else into our Father’s hands and say—“If You should take all away, yet still will I bless Your name, O Most High.”

This is acceptable prayer because it is not soured by the leaven of selfwill, but salted with thankfulness. We must mingle our thanksgivings with our prayers or else we may fear that our mind is not in harmony with the Divine will. Remember, dear Friends, that prayer does not alter the mind of God—it never was the intent of prayer that it should attempt anything of the kind! Prayer is the shadow of the decrees of the Eternal. God has willed such a thing and He makes His saints to will it and express their will in prayer. Prayer is the rustling of the wings of the angels who are bringing the blessing to us. It is written, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart.” It is not said that He will give the desire of their heart to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but you must first delight in the Lord, and when your mind finds all her joy in God, then it is clear that God and you, as far as it can be, are standing on the same plane and moving in the same direction—and now you shall have the desire of your heart because the desire of your heart is the desire of God’s heart!

Character, as much as faith, lies at the basis of prevalence in prayer. I do not mean in the case of the prayer of the sinner when he is seeking mercy, but I mean in the habitual prayers of the godly. There are some

men who cannot pray so as to prevail, for sin has made them weak and God walks contrary to them because they walk contrary to Him. He who has lost the light of God’s Countenance has also lost much of the prevalence of his prayers. You do not suppose that every Israelite could have gone to the top of Carmel and opened the windows of Heaven as Elijah did! No, he must first be Elijah, for it is the effectual, fervent prayer, not of every man, but of a righteous man, that avails much. And when the Lord has put your heart and my heart into an agreement with Him, then we shall pray and prevail!

What did our Lord say—“If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.” Doubtless many lose power in prayer because their lives are grievous in the sight of the Lord and He cannot smile upon them. Will any father listen to the requests of a child who has set himself up in opposition to parental authority? The obedient, tender, loving child who would not wish for anything which you did not think right to give is he whose requests you are pleased to consider and fulfill. Yes, more—you even anticipate the wishes of such a child and before he calls, you answer him. May we be such children of the great God!

III. And now, in the third place, let us consider THE RESULT OF THE PRESENCE OF THIS THANKSGIVING IN CONNECTION WITH PRAYER. According to the context, the presence of thanksgiving in the heart, together with prayer, is productive of peace. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Now that peace, that conscious calm, that Divine serenity which is described as the peace of God is not produced by prayer, alone, but by prayer with thanksgiving!

Some men pray and they do well. But for lack of mixing thanksgiving with it, their prayer agitates them and they come away from the closet even more anxious than when they entered it. If they mingled in their petitions that sweet powder of the merchants which is called praise and mixed it after the art of the apothecary, in due proportions, the blessing of God would come with it causing repose of heart! If we bless our gracious Lord for the very trouble we pray against. If we bless Him for the very mercy which we need, as though it had already come. If we resolve to praise Him whether we receive the gift or not—learning in whatever state we are to be content, then, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.” Brethren, as you value this Divine rest of spirit—as you prize constant serenity of soul—I beseech you mingle praises with your prayers!

The next effect of it will be this—the thanksgiving will often warm the soul and enable it to pray. I believe it is the experience of many who love secret devotion that at times they cannot pray, for their heart seems hard, cold, dumb and almost dead. Do not pump up unwilling and formal prayer, my Brothers and Sisters! But rather take down the hymnbook and sing! While you praise the Lord for what you have, you will find your rocky heart begin to dissolve and flow in rivers! You will be encouraged to plead with the Lord because you will remember what you have before received at His hands!

If you had an empty wagon to raise to the mouth of a coal pit, it might be a very difficult task for you—but the work is managed easily by the common sense of the miners. They make the full wagons, as they run down, pull the empty wagons up the incline. Now, when your heart is loaded with praise for mercy received, let it run down the incline and draw up the empty wagon of your desires and you will thus find it easy to pray! Cold and chill prayers are always to be deplored and, if by so simple a method as entreating the Lord to accept our thanksgiving, our hearts can be warmed and renewed, let us, by all means, take care to use it!

Lastly, I believe that when a man begins to pray with thanksgiving he is upon the eve of receiving the blessing. God’s time to bless you has come when you begin to praise Him as well as pray to Him. God has His set time to favor us and He will not grant us our desire until the due season has arrived. But the time has come when you begin to bless the Lord. Now, take an instance of this in the second Book of Chronicles, 20th chapter and 20th verse. Jehoshaphat went out to fight with an exceedingly great army and mark how he achieved the victory. “They rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His Prophets, so shall you prosper.

“And when he had consulted with the people he appointed”—what? Warriors? Captains? No, that was all done, but he, “appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.” Victory came when they began to sing and to praise! You shall get your answers to prayer when you multiply your thanksgivings in all your prayers and supplications—rest you sure of that! Our thanksgiving will show that the reason for our waiting is now exhausted—that the waiting has answered its purpose and may now come to a joyful end.

Sometimes we are not in a fit state to receive a blessing, but when we reach the condition of thankfulness, then is the time when it is safe for God to indulge us. A professing Christian came to his minister once and said, “Sir, you say we should always pray.” “Yes, my Friend, undoubtedly.” “But then, Sir, I have been praying for 12 months that I might enjoy the comforts of religion and I am no happier than before. I have made that my one perpetual prayer—that I might enjoy the comforts of religion—but I do not feel joy nor even peace of mind. In fact, I have more doubts and fears than I ever had.” “Yes,” said his minister, “and that is the natural result of such a selfish prayer. Why, dear Friend,” he said, “come and kneel down with me and let us pray in another manner. Father, glorify Your name! Your kingdom come! Now,” he said, “go and offer those petitions and get to work to try to make it true and see if you do not soon enjoy the comforts of religion.”  
There is a great deal in that fact—if you will but desire God to be glorified and aim at glorifying Him yourself—then shall the joys of true godliness come to you in answer to prayer. The time for the blessing is when you begin to praise God for it! Brothers and Sisters, you may be sure that when you put up thanksgiving on the ground that God has answered your prayer, you really have prevailed with God! Suppose you had promised to some poor woman that you would give her a meal tomorrow? You might forget it, you know. But suppose when the morning came she sent her little girl with a basket for it? I think she would be likely to get it! But suppose that she sent, in addition, a little note in which the poor soul thanked you for your great kindness? Would you have the heart to say, “My dear girl, I cannot attend to you today. Come another time”? Oh dear no, if the cupboard were bare you would send out to get something because the good soul so believed in you that she had sent you thanks for it before she received your gift!

Well, now, trust the Lord in the same manner! He cannot run back from His Word, my Brethren. Believing prayer holds Him, but believing thanksgiving binds Him! If it is not in your own heart, though you are evil, to refuse to give what you have promised when that promise is so believed that the person rejoices as though he had it—then depend upon it—the good God will not find it in His heart to refuse you! The time for reception is fully come because thanksgiving for that reception fills your heart. I leave the matter with you. If you are enabled to pray in that fashion, great good will come to yourselves, to the Church of God and to the world at large by such prayers.

Now, I think I hear in this audience someone saying, “But I cannot pray so. I do not know how to pray. Oh, that I knew how to pray! I am a poor, guilty sinner. I cannot mix any thanksgiving with my supplications.” Ah, my dear Soul, do not think about that just now. I am not so much preaching to you as I am preaching to the people of God. For you, it is quite enough to say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And yet I will venture to say that there is praise in such a petition. You are implicitly praising the justice of God and you are praising His mercy by appealing to Him. When the prodigal returned and he began his prayer by saying, “I am not worthy to be called your son,” there was, in that confession, a real praise of the father’s goodness, of which he was unworthy to partake.

But you need not think about this matter at present, for you have to find Jesus and eternal life in Him. Go and plead the merit of Jesus and cast yourself upon the love and mercy of God in Him and He will not cast you away! And then another day, when you have found and known Him, take care that the thanksgiving for your salvation never ceases. Even when you are most hungry, poor and needy in the future, continue to bless your saving Lord, and say, “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him! And because the Lord inclined His ear unto me I will praise His name as long as I live.” God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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Sermon #2351 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAYER, THE CURE FOR CARE  
NO. 2351

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 11, 1984. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12, 1888.

**“Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which**

**passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***Php 4:6-7***.**

We have the faculty of forethought, but, like all our faculties, it has been perverted, and it is often abused. It is good for a man to have a holy care and to pay due attention to every item of his life, but, alas, it is very easy to make it into an unholy care and to try to wrest from the hand of God that office of Providence which belongs to Him and not to ourselves. How often Luther liked to talk about the birds and the way God cares for them! When he was full of his anxieties, he used to constantly envy the birds because they led so free and happy a life. He talks of Dr. Sparrow, Dr. Thrush and others that used to come and talk to Dr. Luther and tell him many a good thing! You know, Brothers and Sisters, the birds out in the open, yonder, cared for by God, fare far better than those that are cared for by man. A little London girl, who had gone into the country, once said, “Look, mamma, at that poor little bird. It has not got any cage!” That would not have struck me as being any loss to the bird—and if you and I were without our cage, and the box of seed, and glass of water, it would not be much of a loss if we were cast adrift into the glorious liberty of a life of humble dependence upon God!

It is that cage of carnal trust and that box of seed that we are always laboring to fill, that makes the worry of this mortal life. But he who has Grace to spread his wings and soar away—and get into the open field of Divine trustfulness—may sing all the day and always have this for his tune—

*“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow;  
God provides for the morrow.”*

Here, then, is the teaching of the text—“Be careful for nothing.” The word, “careful,” does not now mean exactly what it did when the Bible was translated. At least it conveys a different meaning to me from what it did to the translators. I would say that we should be careful. “Be careful,” is a good lesson for boys and young people when they are starting in life, but, in the sense in which the word, “care-full,” was understood at the time of the translators, we must not be careful, that is, full of care. The text means, be not anxious—be not constantly thinking about the needs of this mortal life. I will read it again, stretching the word out a little, and then you will get the meaning of it—“Be care-full for nothing.” Oh, that God might teach us how to avoid the evil which is here forbidden, and to live with that holy carelessness which is the very beauty of the Christian life— when all our care is cast on God, and we can joy and rejoice in His Providential care of us!

“Ah,” somebody says, “I cannot help caring.” Well, the subject, tonight, is to help you to leave off caring or worrying and, first, consider, here, the substitute for care. Be careful for nothing, but be prayerful for everything—that is the substitute for care, “prayer and supplication.” Secondly, note the special character of this prayer which is to become the substitute for anxiety—“In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” And then I hope we shall have a few minutes left in which to consider the sweet effect of this prayer—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

I. To begin, then, here is, first, THE SUBSTITUTE FOR CARE OR ANXIETY.  
I suppose it is true of many of us that our cares are numerous. If you once become careful, anxious, fretful, you will never be able to count your cares, even though you might count the hairs of your head. And cares are apt to multiply to those who are care-full and when you are as full of care as you think you can be, you will be sure to have another crop of cares growing up all around you. The indulgence of this evil habit of anxiety leads to its getting dominion over life, till life is not worth living by reason of the care we have about it. Cares are numerous and, therefore, let your prayers be as numerous. Turn everything that is a care into a prayer. Let your cares be the raw material of your prayers and, as the alchemists hoped to turn dross into gold, so you, by a holy alchemy, actually turn what naturally would have been a care into spiritual treasure in the form of prayer! Baptize every anxiety into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—and so make it into a blessing!  
Have you a care to get? Take heed that it does not get you! Do you wish to make gain? Mind you do not lose more than you gain by your gains. I beseech you, have no more care to gain than you dare turn into a prayer! Do not desire to have what you dare not ask God to give you. Measure your desires by a spiritual standard and you will thus be kept from anything like covetousness. Cares come to many from their losses—they lose what they have gained. Well, this is a world in which there is the tendency to lose. Ebbs follow floods and winters crush out summer flowers. Do not wonder if you lose as other people do, but pray about your losses. Go to God with them—and instead of fretting, make them an occasion for waiting upon the Lord and saying—“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Show me why You contend with me, and deliver Your servant, I pray You, from ever complaining of You, whatever You permit me to lose!”  
Perhaps you say that your care is neither about your gaining nor your losing, but about your daily bread. Ah, well, you have promises for that, you know! The Lord has said, “So shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” He gives you sweet encouragement when He says that He clothes the grass of the field—and shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? And the Lord Jesus bids you consider the fowls of Heaven, how they sow not, neither do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Go, then, to your God with all your cares! If you have a large family, a slender income and much ado to make ends meet, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men, you have so many excuses for knocking at God’s door—so many more reasons for being often found at the Throne of Grace! I beseech you, turn them to good account. I feel free to call upon a friend when I really have some business to do with him—and you may be bold to call upon God when necessities press upon you. Instead of caring for anything with anxious care, turn it at once into a reason for renewed prayerfulness.  
“Ah,” one says, “but I am in perplexity. I do not know what to do.” Well, then, dear Friend, you should certainly pray when you cannot tell whether it is the right hand road, or the left hand, or straight on, or whether you should go back! Indeed, when you are in such a fog that you cannot see the next lamp, then is the time that you must pray. The road will clear before you very suddenly. I have often had to try this plan, myself—and I bear witness that when I have trusted to myself, I have been a gigantic fool! But when I have trusted in God, then He has led me straight on in the right way, and there has been no mistake about it! I believe that God’s children often make greater blunders over simple things than they do over more difficult matters. You know how it was with Israel, when those Gibeonites came, with their old shoes and clothes, and showed the bread that was moldy, that they said they took fresh out of their ovens. The children of Israel thought, “This is a clear case. These men are strangers, they have come from a far country, so we may make a league with them.” They were certain that the evidence of their eyes proved that these were no Canaanites, so they did not consult God! The whole matter seemed so plain that they made a league with the Gibeonites, which was a trouble to them ever afterwards! If we would, in everything, go to God in prayer, our perplexities would lead us into no more mistakes than our simplicities— and in simple things and difficult things we should be guided by the Most High.  
Perhaps another friend says, “But I am thinking about the future.” Are you? Well, first, I beg to ask you what you have to do with the future? Do you know what a day will bring forth? You have been thinking about what will become of you when you are old, but are you sure that you will ever be old? I knew one Christian woman who used to worry herself about how she would get buried. That question never troubled me and there are many other matters about which we need not worry ourselves. You can always find a stick with which to beat a dog and, if you need a care, you can generally find a care with which to beat your own souls! But that is a poor occupation for any of you. Instead of doing that, turn everything that might be a subject of care into a subject of prayer. It will not be long before you have a subject of care, so you will not be long without a subject of prayer. Strike out that word, “care,” and just write in the place of it this word, “prayer”—and then, though your cares are numerous, your prayers will also be numerous.  
Note, next, dear Friends, that undue care is an intrusion into God’s province. It is making yourself the father of the household instead of being a child—it is making yourself the master instead of being a servant for whom the master provides his rations. Now, if, instead of doing that, you will turn care into prayer, there will be no intrusion, for you may come to God in prayer without being charged with presumption. He invites you to pray. No, here, by His servant, He bids you, “in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Once more, cares are of no use to us, and they cause us great damage. If you were to worry as long as you wished, you could not make yourself an inch taller, or grow another hair on your head, or make one hair white or black! So the Savior tells us and He asks, if care fails in such little things, what can care do in the higher matters of Providence? It cannot do anything! A farmer stood in his fields and said, “I do not know what will happen to us all. The wheat will be destroyed if this rain keeps on. We shall not have any harvest at all unless we have some fine weather.” He walked up and down, wringing his hands, fretting and making his whole household uncomfortable. And he did not produce one single gleam of sunlight by all his worrying—he could not puff any of the clouds away with all his petulant speech, nor could he stop a drop of rain with all his murmurings.  
What is the good of it, then, to keep gnawing at your own heart, when you can get nothing by it? Besides, it weakens our power to help ourselves and especially our power to glorify God. A care-full heart hinders us from judging rightly in many things. I have often used the illustration (I do not know a better) of taking a telescope, breathing on it with the hot breath of our anxiety, putting it to our eye and then saying that we cannot see anything but clouds! Of course we cannot, and we never shall while we breathe upon it. If we were but calm, quiet, self-possessed and Godpossessed, we would do the right thing. We would be, as we say, “all there,” in the time of difficulty. That man may expect to have presence of mind who has the Presence of God. If we forget to pray, do you wonder that we are all in a fidget and a worry, and we do the first thing that occurs to us—which is generally the worst thing—instead of waiting till we saw what would be done and then trustfully and believingly doing it as in the sight of God? Care, or worry, is injurious, but if you only turn this care into prayer, then every worry will be a benefit to you.  
Prayer is wonderful material for building up the spiritual fabric. We are, ourselves, edified by prayer. We grow in Grace by prayer and if we will but come to God every moment with petitions, we shall be fast growing Christians! I said to one this morning, “Pray for me, it is a time of need,” and she replied, “I have done nothing else since I awakened.” I have made the same request of several others and they have said that they have been praying for me. I felt so glad, not only for my own sake, who had received benefit from their prayers, but for their sakes, because they are sure to grow thereby! When little birds keep flapping their wings, they are learning to fly. The sinews will get stronger and the birds will leave the nest before long. That very clapping of their wings is an education—and the attempting to pray—the groaning, the sighing, the crying of a prayerful spirit, is, itself, a blessing! Leave off, then, this damaging habit of worry and take to this enriching habit of prayer! See how you will thus make a double gain—first, by avoiding a loss, and secondly, by getting that which will really benefit you and others, too!  
Then, again, cares are the effect of forgetfulness of Christ’s closeness to us. Did you notice how the context runs? “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.” The Lord Jesus Christ has promised to come again and He may come tonight. At any moment He may appear! So Paul writes, “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Oh, if we could but stand on this earth as upon a mere shadow! If we could but live as those who will soon have done with this poor transient life! If we held every earthly thing with a very loose hand, then we would not be caring, and worrying, and fretting—but we would take to praying, for thus we would grasp the real, and the substantial, and plant our feet upon the invisible, which is, after all, the eternal! Oh, dear Friends, let the text, which I have read to you over and over again, now drop into your hearts as a pebble falls into a mountain lake and, as it enters, let it make rings of comfort upon the very surface of your soul!  
II. Now we need to look into the text a little more closely to see, in the second place, THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PRAYER. What sort of prayer is that which will ease us of care?  
Well, first, it is a prayer which deals with everything. “In everything” “let your requests be made known unto God.” You may pray about the smallest thing and about the greatest thing—you may not only pray for the Holy Spirit, but you may pray for a new pair of boots. You may go to God about the bread you eat, the water you drink, the garment you wear and pray to Him about everything. Draw no line and say, “So far is to be under the care of God.” Dear me, then, what are you going to do with the rest of life? Is that to be lived under the withering blight of a sort of atheism? God forbid! Oh, that we might live in God as to the whole of our being, for our being is such that we cannot divide it! Our body, soul and spirit are one, and while God leaves us in this world and we have necessities which arise out of the condition of our bodies, we must bring our bodily necessities before God in prayer. And you will find that the great God will hear you in these matters. Say not that they are too little for Him to notice—everything is little in comparison with Him! When I think of what a great God

e is, it seems to me that this poor little world of ours is just one insignificant grain of sand on the seashore of the universe—and not worth any notice at all. The whole earth is a mere speck in the great world of Nature and, if God condescends to consider it, He may as well stoop a little lower and consider us! And He does so, for He says, “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Therefore, in everything let your requests be made known unto God.  
The kind of prayer that saves us from care is prayer that is repeated— “In everything, by prayer and supplication.” Pray to God and then pray again—“by prayer and supplication.” If the Lord does not answer you the first time, be very grateful that you have a good reason for praying again! If He does not grant your request the second time, believe that He loves you so much that He wants to hear your voice again! And if He keeps you waiting till you have gone to Him seven times, say to yourself, “Now I know that I worship the God of Elijah, for Elijah’s God let him go, again, seven times before the blessing was given.” Count it an honor to be permitted to wrestle with the Angel of God! This is the way God makes His princes! Jacob had never been Israel if he had obtained the blessing from the Angel at the first asking—but when he had to keep on wrestling till he prevailed, then he became a prince with God! The prayer that kills care is prayer that is continued and importunate.  
Next, it is intelligent prayer—“Let your requests be made known unto God.” I heard of a Muslim who spent, I think, six hours in prayer each day and, lest he should go to sleep when on board a ship, he stood upright and only had a rope stretched across, so that he might lean against it. And if he slept, he would fall. His objective was to keep on for six hours with what he called prayer. “Well,” I said to one who knew him, and who had seen him on board his boat on the Nile, “What sort of prayer was it?” “Why,” my friend replied, “he kept on repeating, ‘There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God,’ the same thing over, and over, and over again.” I said, “Did he ask for anything?” “Oh, no!” “Was he pleading with God to give him anything?” “No, he simply kept on with that perpetual repetition of certain words, just as a witch might repeat a charm.”  
Do you think there is anything in that style of praying? If you go on your knees and simply repeat a certain formula, it will be only a mouthful of words. What does God care about that kind of praying? “Let your requests be made known unto God.” That is true prayer! God knows what your requests are, but you are to pray to Him as if He did not know. You are to make known your requests, not because the Lord does not know, but, perhaps, because you do not know. And when you have made your requests known to Him, as the text tells you, you will more clearly have made them known to yourself. When you have asked intelligently, knowing what you have asked, and knowing why you have asked it, you will, perhaps, stop and say to yourself, “No, I must not, after all, make that request.” Sometimes, when you have gone on praying for what God does not give you, it may be that there will steal over your mind the conviction that you are not on the right track and that result of your prayer will, in itself, do you good, and be a blessing to you.  
But you are to pray making your requests known unto God. That is, in plain English, say what you need, for this is true prayer. Get alone and tell the Lord what you need—pour out your heart before Him. Do not imagine that God needs any fine language! No, you need not run upstairs for your prayer book, and turn to a collect—you will be a long time before you find any collect that will fit you if you are really praying! Pray for what you need just as if you were telling your mother or your dearest friend what your need is. Go to God in that fashion, for that is real prayer, and that is the kind of prayer that will drive away your cares.  
So, dear Friends, again, the kind of prayer that brings freedom from care is communion with God. If you have not spoken to God, you have not really prayed. A little child has been known (I daresay your children have done it) to go and put a letter down the grating of a drain and, of course, there was never any reply to a letter posted in that way. If the letter is not put into the postbox, so that it goes to the person to whom it is addressed, what is the use of it? So, prayer is real communication with God. You must realize that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or else you cannot pray. He must be a reality to you, a living reality, and you must believe that He hears prayer, and then you must speak with Him and believe that you have the petition that you ask of Him—and so you shall have it. He has never yet failed to honor believing prayer. He may keep you waiting for a while, but delays are not denials, and He has often answered a prayer that asked for silver by giving gold! He may have denied earthly treasure, but He has given heavenly riches of ten thousand times the worth—and the suppliant has been more than satisfied with the exchange! “Let your requests be made known unto God.”  
I know what you do when you are in trouble—you go to your neighbor, but your neighbor does not want to see you quite so often about such business. Possibly you go to your brother, but there is a text that warns you not to go into your brother’s house in the day of your calamity. You may call on a friend too often when you are hard up—he may be very pleased to see you till he hears what you are after! But if you go to your God, He will never give you the cold shoulder. He will never say that you come too often. On the contrary, He will even chide you because you do not come to Him often enough!  
There is one word which I passed over, just now, because I wanted to leave it for my last observation on this point—“By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Now what does that mean? It means that the kind of prayer that kills care is a prayer that asks cheerfully, joyfully, thankfully. “Lord, I am poor. Let me bless You for my poverty and then, O Lord, will You not supply all my needs?” That is the way to pray. “Lord, I am ill. I bless You for this affliction, for I am sure that it means some good thing to me. Now be pleased to heal me, I beseech You!” “Lord, I am in a great trouble, but I praise You for the trouble, for I know that it contains a blessing though the envelope is black-edged! Lord, help me through my trouble!” That is the kind of prayer that kills care—“supplication, with thanksgiving.” Mix these two things well! One drachma—no, two drachma of prayer—prayer and supplication, then one drachma of thanksgiving! Rub them together and they will make a blessed cure for care. May the Lord teach us to practice this holy art of the apothecary!  
III. I finish with this third point, THE SWEET EFFECT OF THIS PRAYER—“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”  
If you can pray in this fashion, instead of indulging evil anxiety, the result will be that an unusual peace will steal over your heart and mind. Unusual, for it will be “the peace of God.” What is God’s peace? The unruffled serenity of the infinitely happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God! This shall possess your heart and mind. Notice how Paul describes it—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding.” Other people will not understand it. They will not be able to make out how you can be so quiet. What is more, you will not be able to tell them, for if it surpasses all understanding, it certainly passes all expression! And what is even more amazing—you will not understand it yourself!  
It will be such a peace that it will be to you, unfathomable and immeasurable. When one of the martyrs was about to burn for Christ, he said to the judge who was giving orders to light the pile, “Will you come and lay your hand on my heart? “The judge did so. “Does it beat fast?” enquired the martyr. “Do I show any sign of fear?” “No,” said the judge. “Now lay your hand on your own heart and see whether you are not more excited than I am.” Think of that man of God, who, on the morning he was to be burned, was so soundly asleep that they had to shake him to wake him— he had to get up to be burned! And yet knowing that it was to be so, he had such confidence in God that he slept sweetly. This is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” In those old Diocletian persecutions, when the martyrs came into the amphitheatre to be torn by wild beasts—when one was set in a red-hot iron chair, another was smeared with honey to be stung to death by wasps and bees—they never flinched!  
Think of that brave man who was put on a gridiron to be roasted to death, who said to his persecutors, “You have done me on one side. Now turn me over to the other.” Why this peace under such circumstances? It was “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” We do not have to suffer like that, nowadays, but if it ever comes to anything like that, it is wonderful what peace a Christian enjoys! After there had been a great storm, the Master stood up in the prow of the vessel and said to the winds, “Be still.” And we read, “there was a great calm.” Have you ever felt this? You feel it tonight if you have learned this sacred art of making your requests known unto God in everything and the peace of God which passes all understanding is keeping your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.  
This blessed peace keeps our hearts and minds—it is a guardian peace. The Greek word implies a garrison. Is it not an odd thing that a military term is used here and that it is peace that acts as a guard to the heart and to the mind? It is the peace of God that is to protect the child of God—strange but beautiful figure! I have heard that fear is the housekeeper for a Christian. Well, fear may be a good guardian to keep dogs out, but it has not a full cupboard! But peace, though it seems weakness, is the essence of strength and, while it guards, it also feeds us and supplies all our needs.  
It is also a peace which links us to Jesus—“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds.” That is, your affections and your thoughts, your desires and your intellect—your heart—so that it shall not fear. Your mind, so that it shall not know any kind of perplexity—“the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is all, “through Christ Jesus” and, therefore, it is doubly sweet and precious to us!  
O my dear Hearers, some of you come in here on Thursday nights and you do not know anything about this peace of God and, perhaps, you wonder why we Christian people make such a fuss about our religion! Ah, if you knew, you would, perhaps, make more fuss about it than we do, for if there were no hereafter—and we know that there is—yet the blessed habit of going to God in prayer and casting all our care upon Him helps us to live most joyfully, even in this life! We do not believe in secularism, but if we did, there would be no preparation for the earthly life like this living unto God and living in God! If you have a sham god and you merely go to Church or Chapel and carry your prayer book or your hymn book with you and, therefore, think you are Christians, you are deceiving yourselves! But if you have a living God and you have real fellowship with Him and constantly, as a habit, live beneath the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, then you shall enjoy a peace that shall make others wonder and make you, yourself, marvel, too, even, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” God grant it to you, my beloved Hearers, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**Philippians 4.**

Verse 1. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, do stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. You know that the Church at Philippi was very dear to the Apostle’s heart. He could never forget the time when he and Silas prayed with the women at the riverside and afterwards prayed and sang praises unto God in the prison, when the prisoners heard them. Lydia and her household and the Philippian jailor were among the first fruits of Paul’s work at Philippi and there was always a very intimate love between him and the members of the Church in that place. They cared for him and he cared for them. Twice in this one verse he speaks of them as his, “dearly beloved.” He says that he “longed for them, longed to come and see them face to face, longed that they might be happy in the Lord to the very highest degree. So he says, “my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy.” It was such a joy to him, even, to think of them as his spiritual children and especially to see after what a godly and generous fashion they behaved themselves. Yes, and he calls them his, “crown”—a garland which he had won in spiritual wrestling! The Christian’s converts are his joy, here, and they will be his crown forever in Heaven. Paul bade these Philippians, “stand fast in the Lord.” It looks like a very simple thing to stand fast, but they who try to do it know how difficult a task it is.

2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. Only two women who had fallen out with one another, but the Apostle is so anxious for perfect unity that he puts in a, “beseech,” for each of them. He does not say which was right and which was wrong, but he would have them, “of the same mind in the Lord.” Little differences, even between obscure members of the Church, may hinder the work of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is like a dove—and doves love quiet places—they do not come where there is noise and strife. Oh, let us cultivate love towards one another! And if in anything we have disagreed at any time, let us think that we hear Paul saying, tonight, “I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Make up, my Sisters! Make up, my Brothers! Whatever the quarrel is, end it and, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” Bought with the same precious blood, robed in the same perfect righteousness, on the way to the same Heaven, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3. And I entreat you also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life. We do not know who this “true yokefellow” was. Very likely it was Epaphroditus who carried this Epistle to Philippi. Whoever it was, it was someone who had worked with Paul shoulder to shoulder. If two bullocks bear the same yoke and yet do not agree, they make it very uncomfortable for one another. If one tries to lie down and the other wants to stand up, or if one goes faster than the other, the yoke becomes doubly galling. Paul speaks of somebody here as having been his “true yokefellow”—and he says to him, “Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel.”

What an eminent place women have always held in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ and here Paul speaks of them as laboring with him in the Gospel! Surely Lydia must have been one of those. “With Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.” According to some learned commentators, a man’s name may be in the Book of Life for a time, but it may be removed. If their teaching is true, that book will be very much scratched and blotted. I thank God that I do not believe in any such book as that! If the Lord Jesus Christ has written my name in the Book of Life, in the great family register of the redeemed, I defy all the devils of Hell to ever get it erased!

4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. If you ever rejoice in the Lord, you may always rejoice in the Lord, for He is always the same, and always gracious! There is as much reason for rejoicing in God at one time as at another, since He never changes.

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The word, “moderation,” in the Greek, is a very difficult word to translate into English. It does not mean moderation in the sense in which some people use the word, for they make it, as I think, almost an accursed one. “Let your moderation”— your gentleness, your willingness, your forbearance—“be known unto all men.” That is what it means. Do not push your own rights too far—stop short of what you might fairly demand and when you feel, at any time, a little vehement in temper, check yourself—hold yourself in, bear and forbear. Go not as far as you may, nor even as far as some think that you ought, in defending your own rights. Let your gentleness, your yieldingness, be known unto all men.

5. The Lord is at hand. Christ is coming—why do you put yourself out? The Lord is near you to help you—why are you so excessively anxious? Why are you so carried away with the present temporary trial? “The Lord is at hand.”

6. Be careful for nothing. Be anxiously careful for nothing! Sing, with Faber—  
*“I have no cares, O blessed Lord, For all my cares are Yours.”*

6-8. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. Everything of this kind concerns you, therefore help it as far as you can. Be on the side of every cause that may be thus described. If it vindicates truth, uprightness, reverence, religion, chastity, holiness—be on that side. If there is anything the reverse of this, do not have anything to do with it, but if there is any movement in the world that will help forward things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, “think on these things,” and so think upon them as to increase their influence among the sons and daughters of men!

9. Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do. It is well when a preacher can speak like that—when he has not to say, “Do as I say and not as I do,” but when, like the Apostle, he can say—“those things, which you have both learned, received, heard and seen in me, do.”

9. And the God of Peace shall be with you. The God of Peace is always with those who receive His dear Son and who help His Gospel. It is one of the privileges of true Believers that the God of Peace shall be constantly with them.

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity. Paul was in prison at Rome and these Philippians had made a contribution. And they had sent Epaphroditus with it to relieve the Apostle in his poverty, so he said to them, “You cared for me before; but for a time you had not the opportunity of helping me, and now you have thought of me, again, therefore I rejoice in the Lord greatly.”

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. Is not that a splendid piece of learning? Paul was a learned man and so are you, if you have learned this lesson! You may not be able to put D.D., or LL.D., after your name, but you are a learned man if you can say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

12. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. These are two grand things to learn. There are some who know the first, but who do not know the second. I have known several of God’s children who seemed quite eminent for piety when they were abased, but they were never worth anything after they grew rich. They did not know how to abound—they became top-heavy and far too great for their britches! It was not so with the Apostle, for he could truthfully say, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.”

12. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Was he not a true Master of Arts? He had mastered the art of being hungry without murmuring, the art of being full without boasting, the art of suffering need without impatience, the art of abounding without setting his affection on worldly things. He was, indeed, a Master of Arts of the very highest order!

13. I can do all things—That looks like bragging, does it not? Finish the sentence.  
14. Through Christ which strengthens me. There is no improper boasting, here, for Paul could do all things through Christ’s mighty power! It has been well said that the angels excel in strength, but the saints excel in their weakness. When we are most weak, and Christ strengthens us, then are the most excellent virtues produced.  
14-17. Notwithstanding, you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. Their liberality was set down to their account in God’s book.  
18, 19. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. It is Paul’s God who took care of the Philippians and it is Paul’s God who will take care of you and me! “My God,” says Paul, “shall supply all your needs—not as you have supplied mine, out of your poverty, but according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus”! Do not imagine that you will ever exhaust God’s riches in Glory, or drain the national treasury of all-sufficiency—that cannot be.  
20. Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen. He blesses us, let us bless Him! He supplies all our needs according to His riches in Glory—let us extol his Glory forever and ever.  
21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. Give him a shake of the hand. Say, “How are you, my Brother? I wish you well.” These hearty salutations ought to be common in every Christian assembly. I always deprecate that wonderful respectability that exists in some places of worship where nobody knows anybody else. They are too respectable to become acquainted with their brethren. If you are in Christ Jesus, get to know one another! “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.”  
21, 22. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. I suppose most of these were only slaves in the imperial household. There may have been one or two, perhaps, of a higher class, but, in all probability, the Gospel first reached the slaves in the Roman palace, that pandemonium of vice, where lust and cruelty abounded. There were saints even there—and God still has some of His jewels lying on dunghills!  
23. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 692, 691. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1397 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Php 4.7

THE PEACE OF GOD  
NO. 1397

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 6, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:7***.**

“PEACE” is a heavenly word. When at the advent of our Lord angels came to sing among men a midnight sonnet, their second note was “Peace on earth.” Would God the shining ones would chant that song again till yonder Balkans heard the strain and shook off the sulfurous cloud which now hangs around them. Those who have ever seen war, or even come near the trail of its bloody march, will be thankful to God for peace. I am almost of his mind who said that the worst peace is preferable to the very best war that was ever waged—if best there can be where all is bad as bad can be. Peace is most pleasant when religion sits beneath its shade and offers her joyful vows to Heaven.

How grateful we ought to be that we can meet together to worship God after that form which best satisfies our consciences without any fear of being hunted down by the authorities of the land. We have no watchman on the hilltops looking out for Claverhouse’s dragoons. We put none at the front door of our conventicle to watch lest the constable should come to take off worshipper and minister, that they may suffer imprisonment or fine. We worship God in unlimited liberty and we ought to be exceedingly glad of the privilege and infinitely more grateful for it than we are. Do we not sit, every man under his own vine and fig tree, none making us afraid? Blessed is the land in which we dwell and blessed are the days in which we live, when in all peace and quietness we worship God in public and sing His high praises as loudly as we please. Great God of Peace, You have given us this peace, and in remembrance of our hunted forefathers we bless You with our whole hearts!

We have met tonight for the purpose of hearing the Gospel of peace and many of us are afterwards coming to that sacred festival which celebrates peace and is to all time the memorial of the great peace-making between God and man. And yet it may be that even all Believers here are not quite at peace. Possibly you did not leave your family in peace this afternoon. Wars occur even among loving hearts. Alas, even Sabbaths are sometimes disturbed, for evil tempers cannot be bound over to keep the peace, but are riotous even on this sweet restful day! Do Christian men ever permit angry feelings to rise within them? If they do, I am sure that even in coming away from home to the House of God, they come with a disturbed mind.

Ah, how insignificant a matter will mar our peace of mind—some little thing that happened in getting to your pew—some trifling incident even while you are in it waiting for worship to begin, may, like dust in your eye, cause you the greatest distress. Such poor creatures are we that we may

lose our peace of mind even by a word or a look! Peace, in the form of perfect calm and serenity, is a very delicate and sensitive thing and needs more careful handling than a Venice glass. It is hard for the sea of our heart to remain long in a smooth and glassy state—it may be rippled and ruffled by an infant’s breath. Perhaps, too, some of my Brothers and Sisters here have not been walking near to God—and if so, their peace will not be perfect.

It may be, my Brother, that during the week you have backslidden somewhat from your true standing and, if so, your peace has fled. Your heart is troubled and though you are believing in Christ for salvation and are, therefore, safe, yet for all that your inward rest may be broken. Therefore would I turn the text into a prayer and pray for myself and for every Believer in Jesus Christ—that the peace of God which passes all understanding may now keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. May you all know the text by experience. He who wrote it had felt it—may we who read it feel it, too. Paul had oftentimes enjoyed the brightness of peace in the darkness of a dungeon and he had felt living peace in prospect of a sudden and cruel death. He loved peace, preached peace, lived in peace, died in peace and, behold, he has entered into the fruition of peace and dwells in peace before the Throne of God!

Looking at the text and thinking how we might handle it best to our profit, I thought we would notice, first of all, the unspeakable privilege— “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” Then, secondly, I thought that we might gather, from its connection, the method of coming at it, for the preceding sentences are linked to our text by the word, “and,” which is not an incidental conjunction, but is placed there with a purpose. Paul means to say that if we do what he bids us do in the 4th, 5th and 6th verses, then the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds. When we have looked at that matter for a few minutes, I shall need your careful attention, in the third place, to the power of its operation—for the peace of God “shall keep your hearts and minds.”

And then we shall close, in the fourth place, by noticing the sphere of its action, namely, “in Christ Jesus.” The word should have been, “in,” rather than, “through”—“shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” May the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Peace, now lead us into the center and secrets of our text.

I. First, then, here is AN UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE—one which is very hard to speak of because it passes all understanding and, therefore, you may be sure it must pass all description! It is one of those things which can be more readily experienced than explained. Good Joseph Stennett was right when he spoke of those who—

*“Draw from Heaven that sweet repose*

*Which none but he that feels it knows.”*  
We may talk about inward rest and dilate upon the peace of God. We may select the most choice expressions to declare the delicacy of its enjoyment, but we cannot convey to others the knowledge second hand—they must feel it or they cannot understand it. If I were speaking to little children, I would illustrate my point by the story of the boy at one of our mission stations who had a piece of sugar cube given him one day at school.

He had never tasted such essence of sweetness and when he went home to his father, he told him that he had eaten something which was wonderfully sweet. His father said, “Was it as sweet as such-and-such a fruit?” “It was far sweeter than that.” “Was it as sweet as such-and-such a food?” which he mentioned. “It was much sweeter than that. But Father,” he said, “I cannot explain it.” He rushed out of the house back to the mission house, begged a piece of sugar out of it and brought it back. He then said, “Father, taste and see, and then you will know how sweet it is.” So I venture to use that simple illustration and say, “O taste and see that the peace of God is good,” for in very deed it surpasses all the tongues of men and of angels to set it forth!

What is the peace of God? I would describe it, first, by saying it is, of course, peace with God. It is peace of conscience, actual peace with the Most High through the atoning Sacrifice. Reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration to favor there must be—and the soul must be aware of it— there can be no peace of God apart from justification through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ received by faith. A man conscious of being guilty can never know the peace of God till he becomes equally conscious of being forgiven. When his consciousness of pardon shall become as strong and vivid as his consciousness of guilt had been, then will he enter into the enjoyment of the peace of God which passes all understanding!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—you that have believed in Jesus— there is perfect peace between you and God now—“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Your sin was the ground of the quarrel, but it has gone. It has ceased to be! It is blotted out! It is cast into the depth of the sea! As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us! Our Divine Scapegoat has carried our iniquities into the wilderness. Our Lord and Master has finished transgression, made an end of sin. He has brought in everlasting righteousness. The cause of offense is gone and gone forever—Jesus has taken our guilt, has suffered in our place, has made full compensation to the injured Law and vindicated Justice to the very highest—and now there is nothing which can excite the anger of God towards us, for our sin is removed and our unrighteousness is covered.

We are reconciled to God by Christ Jesus and accepted in the Beloved. Now this actual reconciliation brings to the heart a profound sense of peace. O that all of you possessed it! O that those who know it knew it more fully! Remember, O Soul, if Christ did, indeed, suffer in your place and was made a curse for you, Justice can never require at your hands the penalty which your Surety has discharged, for this would be to dishonor His Sacrifice by making it of no effect! If Jesus stood as your Substitute and bore what God required as the vindication of His Law, then you are clear, beyond all doubt clear forever, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

If it were not so, why was there a Substitute permitted? Did God design to tantalize mankind by permitting an ineffectual substitution? What did

He accomplish if He did not save those for whom He died? What meaning is there in the Gospel if it does not reveal an effectual Atonement? But truly the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are saved! Here the soul rests! At the foot of the Cross it finds a peace it never could have found elsewhere. I hope that many of you are now able to sing—

*“Jesus was punished in my stead,  
Outside the gate my Surety bled  
To expiate my stain.  
On earth the Godhead deigned to dwell,  
And made of Infinite avail  
The sufferings of the man.  
And was He for such rebels given?  
He was! The Incarnate King of Heaven  
Did for His foes expire!  
Amazed, O earth, the tidings hear  
He bore, that we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

There take your full of peace, for by this Sacrifice a Covenant of Peace is now established between you and your God—and it is sealed by atoning blood.

“The peace of God, which passes all understanding” also takes a second form, namely, that of a consequent peace in the little kingdom within. When we know that we are forgiven and that we are at peace with God, things within us come to a sudden and delightful change. By nature everything in our inner nature is at war with itself—it is a cage of evil beasts all tearing and devouring each other. Man is out of order—out of order with God, with the universe and with himself. The machinery of manhood has fallen into serious disorder—its cogs and wheels do not work in due harmony, but miss their touch and stroke. The passions, instead of being ruled by reason, often demand to hold the reins. Reason, instead of being guided by the knowledge which God communicates by His Word, chooses to obey a depraved imagination and demands to become a separate power and to judge God Himself!

There is not a faculty of our nature which is not in rebellion against God and, consequently, in a state of confusion with regard to the rest of our system. A cruel internal war often rages among our mental powers, animal instincts and moral faculties causing distress, fear and unhappiness. There is no cure for this but restoring Grace. O Man, you cannot get your heart right! You cannot get your conscience right! You cannot get your understanding right! You cannot bring your various powers to their bearings and make them act in true harmony till first you are right with God! The King must occupy the throne and then the estate of Mansoul will be duly settled—but till the chief authority has due eminence—rebellion and riot will continue.

When the Lord breathes peace into a man and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove to dwell within the soul, then is there quiet—where all was chaos, order appears, the man is created anew and becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And though rebellious lusts still try to get the mastery, yet there is now a ruling power which keeps the man in order so that within him there is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” This leads on to peace in reference to all outward circumstances by reason of our confidence that God orders them all rightly and arranges them all for our good. The man who believes in Jesus and is reconciled to God has nothing outside of him that he needs to fear. Is he poor? He rejoices that Christ makes poor men rich! Does he prosper? He rejoices that there is Divine Grace to sanctify his prosperity lest it become intoxicating to him!

Does there lie before him a great trouble? He thanks God for His promise that as his day his strength shall be. Does he apprehend the loss of friends? He prays that the trial may be averted, for he is permitted so to pray, even as David begged for the life of his child. But, having so done, he feels sure that God will not take away an earthly friend unless it is with kind intent to gather up our trust and confidence more fully to Himself. Does there lie before him the prospect of speedy death? The hope of resurrection gives peace to his dying pillow! He knows that his Redeemer lives and he is content to let his body sleep in the dust awhile. Is he reminded by Scripture of a Day of Judgment when all hearts shall be revealed? He has peace with regard to that dread mystery and all that surrounds it, for he knows whom he has believed and he knows that He will protect him in that day.

Whatever may be suggested that might alarm or distress the Believer, deep down in his soul he cannot be disturbed because he sees his God at the helm of the vessel holding the rudder with a hand which defies the storm. This is peculiarly advantageous in days like these when all things wear a dreary aspect. The storm signals are flying, the clouds are gathering, flashes of lightning and sounds of distant thunder are all around us. If you read the papers, wars and rumors of wars are incessant! Your eyes light upon narratives of famine and drought. You see distress here, slackness of business there and poverty and starvation in many places—and the fear creeps over you that there are dark days yet to come and seasons in which faces will grow pale and hands hang heavy.

Brothers and Sisters, it is for the Believer, in such a case, to feel no dismay, for our God is in the heavens and He does not forsake the Throne. His purposes will be fulfilled and good will come out of evil, for at this very moment God sits in the council chambers of kings and orders all things according to the counsel of His will. We are not children whose father has gone to sea and left us at home without a guardian. We read just now the words, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you,” and we believe that gracious Word of God! God is most near us and we are most safe. Though we cannot see the future and do not wish to pry between the folded leaves of the book of destiny, we are absolutely certain that nothing is written upon the unopened page of the future which can contradict the Divine faithfulness so conspicuous in the past. We are sure that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose—and therefore our soul, as to all external circumstances, casts anchor and enjoys the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Nor is this all. God is pleased to give to His people peace in reference to all His commands. While the soul is unregenerate, it rebels against the mind and will of God. If God forbids, the unrenewed heart longs for the

forbidden thing. If God commands, the natural mind, for that very reason, refuses to do it! But when the change takes place and we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, then, Beloved, we drop into the same line with God and our deepest desire is to abide in full harmony with Him. His will becomes our delight and our only sorrow is that we cannot be perfectly conformed to it. There is no precept of God which is grievous to a gracious heart. His statutes are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage. We also feel perfect peace with regard to God’s providential doings because we believe that they are helping us to arrive at conformity with Him—and that is just what we want.

Oh that we could never have a thought or wish, from now on, that would be disagreeable to the Lord! We love Him, we love His ways, we love His people, we love His Word, we love His Day, we love His promises, we love His Laws—we are altogether agreed with Him through His rich Grace—and in this sense we have a peace towards God which passes all understanding. What a wonderful description that is of this peace—it “passes all understanding.” It is not only beyond a common understanding, but it passes all understanding. Some have said it means that the ungodly man cannot understand it. That statement is true, but it is not a tenth of the whole meaning, for even he who enjoys it cannot understand it! It is deeper, it is broader, it is sweeter, it is more heavenly than the joyful saint, himself, can tell. He enjoys what he cannot understand! What a mercy that such a thing is possible, for otherwise our joys would be narrow, indeed! Reason has limits far more narrow than joy. Truly this peace is hid from the eyes of the ungodly and the unbelieving— it is far above, out of their sight.

Now, there are kinds of peace in the world which the ungodly man can understand. There were the Stoics who schooled themselves to apathy— they would not feel and so they attained a senseless peace—their secret is easily discovered, it does not pass understanding. Many a Red Indian has been as stolid as the greatest Stoic and has, perhaps, surpassed him in hardening himself so that he would not groan if pierced with arrows or burned with fire. Some men have had such mastery over themselves that it has seemed a matter of perfect indifference whether they suffered pain or not.

But Christianity does not teach us stoicism, nor does it point in that direction. It cultivates tenderness, not insensibility. Its influence tends to make us sensitive rather than callous and gives us a peace consistent with the utmost delicacy of feeling, yes, with a sensitiveness more intense than other men know since it makes our conscience more tender and causes the mind to be deeply distressed by the slightest frown of Heaven. Our peace is not the peace of apathy, but one of a far nobler sort. Others have aimed at the peace of levity, which the world can readily understand. They count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away and whatever happens of ill they drown reflection of it in the flowing bowl and laugh over it—making mirth when misery devours their souls.

Christians do not attempt to get rid of the trials of life in that fashion. The world, therefore, cannot understand the Believer’s peace since he is neither apathetic nor frivolous. From where does this peace come? The jaunty answer of many a worldling is, “Oh, it comes from some fanatical delusion.” But, indeed, we are not deluded. The grounds of a Christian’s peace are rational, logical and well grounded. They are to be justified by common sense. A person who has been in debt and who is still in debt, ought not to be at peace. But suppose a man is found to be perfectly at his ease—who can blame him if he can say, “I have a right to be so, for my debt is paid”? No one can challenge such an argument!

He who believes that Christ Jesus suffered in his place that which was due to God’s justice has a rational argument for being at peace which he may plead anywhere he pleases. God has forgiven, for Christ’s sake, all his iniquity—why should he not be at peace? And if it is, indeed, so—that the Christian has become the child of God—ought he not to be at peace? If God his Father rules all things for his good, ought he not to be at peace? If for him there remains no danger of eternal death—if for him there is prepared a glorious resurrection—and if he is ultimately to shine with Christ in eternal Glory, why should not the man have peace? It is far more difficult, I should think, to rationally blame him for his happiness than it would be to justify him if he were in alarm. We are not victims of delusion but speak the words of the Truth of God and soberness when we claim to be the most favored of mankind! The folly and the fanaticism lie with those who neglect God, eternity and make a mockery of sin. And so the worldling does not understand our peace and frequently sneers at it because he is puzzled by it.

Even the Christian is sometimes surprised at his own peacefulness. I know what it is to suffer from terrible depression of spirit at times, yet at the very moment when it has seemed to me that life was not worth one single bronze coin, I have been perfectly peaceful with regard to all the greater things. There is a possibility of having the surface of the mind lashed into storm while yet down deep in the caverns of one’s inmost consciousness all is still—I know this by experience. There are earthquakes upon this earth and yet our globe pursues the even tenor of its way and the same is true in the little world of a Believer’s nature. Why, sometimes a Christian will feel himself to be so flooded with a delicious peace that he could not express his rapture! He is almost afraid to sing, lest even the sound of his voice should break the spell. But he says to himself—

*“Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise.”*

Satan has breathed a whisper into the mind—“It is too good to be true,” but the spirit, firmly believing in the truthfulness of God, has repelled the insinuation and rested in the faithfulness of God, in the Eternal Covenant, in the finished work of Christ, in the love of God manifested towards His people in Christ Jesus. This is the peace of God. “So He gives His beloved sleep.” It is a rest with an emphasis—rest in Jesus’ sense when He said—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His rest in the most golden sense that we can ever give to the word and much more! It passes understanding, but it does not surpass experience! Do you know it? I pray you will answer the question, each one for himself, for I must come back to where I started from. It is not to be described—it must be tested to be

known.

II. Now, I must, in the second place, with very much brevity, indicate, beloved Friends, HOW THIS PEACE IS TO BE OBTAINED. Now, mark you, the Apostle was addressing himself only to Believers in the Lord Jesus and I must beg you to take heed to the limitation. I am not addressing myself to the ungodly—I speak only to Christians. You are always at peace with God though you do not always enjoy the sense of it. If you wish to realize it, how are you to do so? The connection tells you. In the 4th verse Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” If you want to have peace of mind, make God your Joy and place all your joy in God!

You cannot rejoice in yourself, but you ought to rejoice in God. You cannot always rejoice in your circumstances, for they greatly vary, but the Lord never changes. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” If you have rejoicing in earthly things you must indulge it moderately. But rejoicing in the Lord may be used without the possibility of excess, for the Apostle adds, “Again I say, Rejoice”—rejoice and rejoice again! Delight yourselves in the Lord. Who has such a God as you have? “Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.” Who has such a Friend, such a Father, such a Savior, such a Comforter as you have in the Lord your God? To think of God as our exceeding Joy is to find “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

Go on to the 5th Verse, where the Apostle says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” That is to say, While all your joy is in God, deal with all earthly things on the principle of caution. If any man praises you, do not exult. If, on the contrary, you are censured, do not let your spirit sink. If you have prosperity, thank God for it, but do not be assured that it will continue. If property is yours, use it, but do not let it become your treasure or the chief consideration of your mind. Do you suffer adversity? Pray God to help you, but do not be so cast down as to despair. Drink of earthly cups by sips—do not be foolish like the fly which drowns itself in sweets. Use the things of time as not abusing them. Do not wade far out into the dangerous sea of this world’s comfort. Take the good that God provides you, but say of it, “It passes away,” for, indeed, it is but a temporary supply for a temporary need. Never suffer your goods to become your god. Rejoice only in God and as for all else, come or go, rise or fall, let it neither distress you nor make you exult. Take matters quietly and calmly and if you do that you will have peace. If you idolize any earthly good, your peace will depart. Keep the world under your feet and the peace of God shall keep your heart and mind.

Three rules are then added by the Apostle which you will be sure to remember. He tells us to be careful for nothing, to be prayerful for everything and to be thankful for anything. Anyone who can keep these three rules, with the other two, will be quite sure to have a peaceful mind. “Be careful for nothing.” That is, leave your care with God. Having done your best to provide things honest in the sight of all men, take no distressing, disturbing, anxious thought about anything, but cast your burden on the Lord. Then pray about everything, little, as well as great— joyous, as well as sad. “In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.” That which you pray over will have the sting taken out of it if it is evil and the sweetness of it will be sanctified if it is good. The tribulation which you pray over will become bearable even if it is not changed into a subject for rejoicing. A trouble prayed over is a dead lion with honey in the carcass!

And then we are bid to be thankful for anything, for the Apostle says, “In everything, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Thankfulness is the great promoter of peace—it is the mother and nurse of restfulness. Doubtless our peace is often broken because we receive mercies from God without acknowledging them—neglected praises sour into unquiet forebodings. If we render to the Lord the fragrant incense of holy gratitude we shall find our soul perfumed with the sweet peace of God. Take those five things, then, as the connection sets them before you. Pile up all your joy into the sacred storehouse of your God and be glad in the Lord.

Next, leave, as much as you can, the things of this world alone—touch them with a light finger—“Let your moderation be known unto all men.” And then pray much, care for nothing and bless God from morning to night! In such an atmosphere shall peace grow as rare flowers and fruits bloom beneath sunny skies in well-watered gardens. May the Holy Spirit work these things in us and cause us to rest.

III. This brings me to the third point of our subject tonight, which is THE OPERATION OF THIS BLESSED PRIVILEGE UPON OUR HEARTS. It is said that the peace of God will keep our hearts and minds. The Greek word is phroureo, which signifies keeping guard, keeping as with a garrison so completely and so effectually does the peace of God keep our hearts and minds. Look, then—our hearts need keeping, keeping from sinking, for our poor spirits are very apt to faint, even under small trials. They also need keeping from wandering, for how soon are they beguiled! What feeble charms are able to attract us away from the altogether lovely One! Our hearts need keeping up and keeping right.

The way to keep the heart, according to the text, is to let it be filled with the peace of God which passes all understanding. A quiet spirit—calm, restful, happy—is one that will neither sink nor wander—how can it? If the peace of God is in you, what can cause you distress? You will be like those great buoys moored out at sea which cannot sink. It matters not what storms may be raging, they always rise above all. Our souls, moored fast and rendered buoyant with peace, will be as fixed marks whereby others may know their way. Moreover, a man who has his heart full of peace is not likely to wander, for he says to himself, “Why should I wander? Where can such sweetness be found as I have tasted in my Lord? Why should I seek elsewhere?” The best way to keep a person in your service is to make it worth his while to stay and if he is so happy and so content that he feels he could not better himself, you are likely to retain him for many a long day.

Now, our Lord and Master has made His service such that we could not better ourselves. When He said to some of His servants, “Will you, also, go away?” They said, “To whom shall we go?” Ah, indeed! To whom could we go? Eyes, will you leave the light for the thick darkness? Ears, will you

turn away from the music of Jesus’ voice? Heart, will you leave a faithful lover for a deceiver? Understanding, will you go abroad after novelties when you have found the old, sure, satisfactory Truth of God? Conscience, will you burden yourself, again, with your former load? When you are so perfectly satisfied with the work and Person of Christ, will you not stay where you are? Oh yes, the heart is held with bands as strong as they are tender when it is full of the peace of God which passes understanding!

You young people get tempted, I know, and who among us does not? And the world has many charms for you. I recommend you, therefore, pray to the Lord to maintain your happiness in Christ, your joy in the Lord. If you get out of heart with regard to your Lord and Master, it may be the devil may catch you when you are bad tempered and cross-grained towards your great Lord—and entice you away from your allegiance. But if your heart is always peaceful, you will have a strength about you with which to resist the suggestions of the Evil One. Rivets of peace are good fasteners for Christian loyalty. It is a very serious thing for a Christian to be in an uncomfortable state, for he is then weak in an important point. “Comfort you, comfort you, My people,” are God’s words to His Prophets, because He knows that when we lose comfort, or lose peace, we lose one of the most valuable pieces of armor of which our panoply is composed. But the text also adds that this will keep our mind as well as our heart.

Now in all ages we find that the minds of Christians have been apt to be disturbed and vexed upon vital Truths of God. I think, sometimes, that this is the worst age for error which has ever darkened the world. I get distressed and bowed to the earth as I see the treachery of ministers, professed ministers of Christ, who deny the Inspiration of Scripture and lay the axe at the very root of all the doctrines which we hold dear while they continue to occupy Christian pulpits. But when I look back all through history I find it was always so. From the days of Judas Iscariot until now there have been traitors and there have been men of ready speech and of quick thought who have used both fair speech and subtle thought to turn away simple minds from the Gospel, in that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect!

But why are not the elect deceived? As a rule it is because they find such peace—such perfect peace—in the Truths of God which they have received, that deceivers vainly attempt to entice them away from it. “Ah,” cries the restful Believer, “I cannot give up the Gospel. It is my life, my strength, my solace, my all! It was the comfort of my dying mother and it remains the mainstay of my aged father. It was that which brought me to a Savior’s feet and gives me Grace to remain there. It has helped me in the hour of trial again and again. I feel I need its consolations and, therefore, I can never part with it.” And so he grows indignant with the man who casts a doubt, especially if he is of the clerical order and a pretender to the Christian ministry. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot move one single inch from the Truth which we have been taught by the Holy Spirit in our soul—and it is only such Truth as that which can bring into the heart the peace of God which passes understanding!

When the Lord has brought His own Truth into our minds by His own power and made the sweet savor of it to pervade our frame—and when He has given us to drink thereof till we have been filled with joy and peace unutterable—we cannot, then, depart from it! Truth taught us by man we may forget, but that which the Holy Spirit engraves upon the inmost heart we cannot depart from. So help us God, we must stand to it even if we die for it! And what are the inventions they offer us instead of the choice things of the Covenant of Peace? They are trifles light as air! If they were true they would not be worth propagating—they might be left among the minor matters which are of no practical value to the sons of men.

They bring us no new grounds of solid peace or fresh discovered arguments for holy joy. The negative theology promises no blessings to mankind. It is an empty-handed plunderer, robbing us of every solace and offering nothing in return. If modern thought could be proved to be true, the next thing that ought to be done would be to hang the world in sackcloth because such vanity of vanities has taken the place of the delightful Truth of God which once gladdened the hearts of men! It would be the saddest of all facts if we were assured that the Doctrines of Grace are, after all, a fiction. But they are not so. They cannot be! They bear their own witness within themselves. Some of us can speak about them as Christian replied to Atheist, when Atheist said, “Go back! Go back!” Christian’s reply was, “We are seeking the Celestial City.” “Oh,” said Atheist, “but I have gone farther than any of you and I tell you that there is no such place. I have met with many learned men who have studied the whole matter and it is all a delusion. Go back! Bo back!”

Then Christian said, “What? No Celestial City? Did we not see it from the top of Mount Clear, when we were with the shepherds and looked through the telescopic glass?” So we say—No Atonement? Have we not felt the peace with which it soothes the conscience? No regeneration? Are we not, ourselves, the living evidence that men are made new creatures in Christ Jesus? No answers to prayer? Surely, then, we are not sane men at all and our senses have failed us! No final perseverance? What, then, has kept us to this day? No work of the Holy Spirit? What? Are we asleep? Is even our existence a delusion? No, as we rub our eyes, we feel that we have not been dreaming! We feel sure that some other people are dozing and doting—and we pray that God, in mercy, may end their dream and bring them to know those glorious and substantial Truths which fill us with the peace of God which passes all understanding!

We are bound to the Cross forever! We are nailed to the wood with Christ forever! The blood-red colors of the Atonement are fastened to our masthead, to fly there till our vessel sinks, if sink it must, but never to be struck by man or devil, priest or philosopher! We dare not change, but stand faithful to that which Jesus has taught us, at whose feet we sat in our youth and who still continues to teach us! His peace keeps our heart and mind and, therefore, we will, with heart and mind, keep His Truth, come what may.

IV. Lastly, let us observe THE SPHERE OF ITS ACTION. The text says, “In Christ Jesus.” Now, Beloved, I beg you to note this with interest. The Apostle never mentions the name of Jesus too often. You cannot say that he drags it in, but he mentions it as often as he can, for he delights in

the sound of it. “In Christ Jesus.” These words touch every point of our text all the way through. Are we speaking of ourselves? We are in Christ Jesus! Our faith has realized our union with His sacred Person. He is our Head and we are His members. He is the Cornerstone and we are built upon Him. There is nothing about ourselves worth thinking of apart from Him—and it will be well if we dismiss the thought.

Then if we dwell upon the peace of God, we still think of our Lord Jesus, for it is all in Him. No peace is to be found out of Christ! No peace can warm our heart while we forget Christ! “He is our peace.” Never go, dear Brothers and Sisters, for your peace to the Law or to your own experience—to your own past achievements, or even to your own faith! All your peace is in Jesus. And then our hearts and our minds, mentioned in the text, must all be in Jesus—the heart loving Him and loved of Him. The mind believing Him, resting in Him, using its faculties for Him—all in Him! If I leave that last thought with you it will be the best ending for my sermon, namely, that to get peace and to get your hearts and minds kept, the grand necessity is to be in Christ—in your dying, risen, reigning Lord! Let Him be upon your thoughts now and always! His table is now spread, come here to commune with Him. Come here with your Master, to see your Master and to eat His flesh and drink His blood, after a spiritual fashion, at His own table!

A word to you who do not know our Lord. How I wish you did know Him! You can never possess peace till you possess Christ! What a blessed beginning of Sabbaths it would be to your souls if you were to seek Christ tonight. You have not far to go to find Him. He is not far from any of us. Cover your eyes and breathe a prayer to Him. Stand behind one of the columns outside or get into the street and let your heart say, “Savior, I need peace, and peace I can never have till I have found You. Behold, I trust You. Manifest Yourself to me at this moment and say unto my soul, ‘I am your salvation.’” God grant you may so pray!

It seems to me very amazing that we should need to persuade men to think of their own interests and to care for their own selves! In other things they are always sharp enough to look after what they call, “Number One,” but when it comes to the most solemn concern—the greatest blessing and the purest happiness that can be had—they are so foolish as to let all other things attract them more than the Lord Jesus! The Lord save you all for His infinite mercy’s sake! Amen.

[EARNEST prayer is desired for the special services now being held at the Tabernacle and also for Mr. SPURGEON, that he may be fully restored and may return to his people in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. He is, by God’s Grace, already greatly improved in health.]

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HOW TO KEEP THE HEART  
NO. 180

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:7***.**

IT is remarkable that when are find an exhortation given to God’s people in one part of the Holy Scripture, we almost invariably find the very thing which they are exhorted to do guaranteed to them and provided for them in some other part of the same blessed volume. This morning my text was, “Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Now, this evening we have the Promise upon which we must rest if we desire to fulfill the precept—“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This evening we shall use another figure distinct from the one used in the morning of the reservoir. We shall use the figure of a fortress which is to be kept. And the Promise says that it shall be kept—kept by “the peace of God which passes all understanding through Christ Jesus.”

Inasmuch as the heart is the most important part of man—for out of it are the issues of life—it would be natural to expect that Satan, when he intended to do mischief to manhood, would be sure to make his strongest and most perpetual attacks upon the heart. What we might have guessed in wisdom is certainly true in experience. For although Satan will tempt and try us in every way, though every gate of the town of Mansoul may be battered, though against every part of the walls thereof he will be sure to bring out his great guns—the place against which he levels his deadliest malice and his most furious strength is the heart. Into the heart, already of itself evil enough, he thrusts the seeds of every evil thing and does his utmost to make it a den of unclean birds, a garden of poisonous trees, a river flowing with destructive water.

Hence, again, arises the second necessity that we should be doubly cautious in keeping the heart with all diligence. For if, on the one hand, it is the most important, and, on the other hand, Satan, knowing this, makes his most furious and determined attacks against it, then, with double force the exhortation comes, “Keep your heart with all diligence.” And the Promise also becomes doubly sweet from the very fact of the double danger—the Promise which says, “The peace of God shall keep your

hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We shall notice, first of all, that which keeps the heart and mind. Secondly, we shall note how to obtain it—for we are to understand this Promise as connected with certain precepts which come before it. And then, when we have noted this, we shall try to show how it is true that the peace of God does keep the mind free from the attacks of Satan, or delivers it from those attacks when they are made.

I. First, then, Beloved, the preservation which God in this Promise confers upon the saints is “THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING,” to keep us through Jesus Christ. It is called PEACE. And we are to understand this in a double sense. There is a peace of God which exists between the child of God and God his Judge—a peace which may be truly said to pass all understanding. Jesus Christ has offered so all-sufficient a satisfaction for all the claims of injured justice that now God has no fault to find with His children. “He sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel.” Nor is He angry with them on account of their sins—a peace unbroken and unspeakable being established by the atonement which Christ has made on their behalf.

Hence flows a peace experienced in the conscience which is the second part of this peace of God. For, when the conscience sees that God is satisfied and is no longer at war with it, then it also becomes satisfied with man. And Conscience, which was front to be a great disturber of the peace of the heart now gives its verdict of acquittal and the heart sleeps in the arms of Conscience and finds a quiet resting place there. Against the child of God Conscience brings no accusation—or if it brings the accusation, it is but a gentle one—gentle chiding of a loving friend who hints that we have done amiss and that we had better change—but does not afterwards thunder in our ears the threat of a penalty. Conscience knows full well that peace is made between the soul and God and, therefore, it does not hint that there is anything else but joy and peace to be looked forward to by the Believer.

Do we understand anything of this double peace? Let us pause here and ask ourselves a question upon this doctrinal part of the matter. Let us make it an experimental question with our own hearts. “Come, my Soul, are you at peace with God? Have you seen your pardon signed and sealed with the Redeemer’s blood? Come, answer this, my Heart—have you cast your sins upon the head of Christ and have you seen them all washed away in the crimson streams of His blood? Can you feel that now there is a lasting peace between yourself and God so that, come what may God shall not be angry with you—shall not condemn you—shall not consume you in His wrath, nor crush you in His hot displeasure?

If it is so, then, my Heart, you can scarcely need to stop and ask the second question—Is my conscience at peace? For, if my heart condemns me not, God is greater than my heart and does know all things. If my conscience bears witness with me that I am a partaker of the precious grace of salvation, then happy am I! I am one of those to whom God has given the peace which passes all understanding. Now, why is this called “the peace of God”?

We suppose it is because it comes from God—because it was planned by God—because God gave His Son to make the peace—because God gives His Spirit to give the peace in the conscience—because, indeed, it is God Himself in the soul, reconciled to man, whose is the peace. And while it is true that this man shall have the peace—even the Man-Christ, yet we know it is because He was the God-Christ that He was our peace. And hence we may clearly perceive how Godhead is mixed up with the peace which we enjoy with our Maker and with our conscience.

Then we are told that it is “the peace of God which passes all understanding.” What does He mean by this? He means such a peace that the understanding can never comprehend—can never attain to. The understanding of mere carnal man can never comprehend this peace. He who tries with a philosophic look to discover the secret of the Christian’s peace, finds himself in a maze. “I know not how it is, nor why it is,” says he. “I see these men hunted through the earth. I turn the pages of history and I find them hunted to their graves. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted and tormented. Yet I also see upon the Christian’s brow a calm serenity. I cannot understand this. I do not know what it is. I know that I myself, even in my merriest moments, am disturbed. That when my enjoyments run the highest, still there are waves of doubt and fear across my mind. Then why is this? How is it that the Christian can attain a rest so calm, so peaceful and so quiet?”

Understanding can never get to that peace which the Christian has attained. The philosopher may teach us much. He can never give us rules whereby to reach the peace that Christians have in their conscience. Diogenes may tell us to do without everything and may live in his tub and then think himself happier than Alexander and that he enjoys peace. But we look upon the poor creature after all and though we may be astonished at his courage, yet we are obliged to despise his folly. We do not believe that even when he had dispensed with everything that he possessed a quiet of mind, a total and entire peace such as the true Believer can enjoy.

We find the greatest philosophers of old laying down maxims for life which they thought would certainly promote happiness. We find that they were not always able to practice them themselves. And many of their disciples, when they labored hard to put them in execution, found themselves encumbered with impossible rules to accomplish impossible objects. But the Christian man does with faith what a man can never do himself. While the poor understanding is climbing up the crags, Faith stands on the summit. While the poor understanding is getting into a calm atmosphere, Faith flies aloft and mounts higher than the storm and then looks down on the valley and smiles while the tempest blows beneath its feet. Faith goes further than understanding and the peace which the Christian enjoys is one which the worldling cannot comprehend and cannot himself attain. “The peace of God which passes all understanding.”

And this peace is said to “keep the mind through Christ Jesus.” Without Christ Jesus this peace would not exist. Without Christ Jesus this peace, even where it has existed, cannot be maintained. Daily visits from the Savior, continual looking by the eye of faith to Him that bled upon the Cross, continual drawings from His ever-flowing fountain make this peace broad and long and enduring. But take Christ Jesus, the channel of our peace away, and it fades and dies and droops and comes to nothing. A Christian has no peace with God except through the atonement of his Lord Jesus Christ.

I have thus gone over what some will call the dry doctrinal part of the subject—“The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” I cannot show you what that peace is if you have never felt it. But yet I think I could tell you where to look for it, for I have sometimes seen it. I have seen the Christian man in the depths of poverty—when he lived from hand to mouth and scarcely knew where he should find the next meal—still with his mind unruffled, calm and quiet. If he had been as rich as an Indian prince, yet could he not have had less care. If he had been told that his bread should always come to his door and the stream which ran hard by should never dry. If he had been quite sure that ravens would bring him bread and meat in the morning and again in the evening—he would not have been one whit more calm.

There is his neighbor on the other side of the street not half so poor, but wearied from morning to night—working his fingers to the bone— bringing himself to the grave with anxiety. But this poor good man, after having industriously labored, though he found he had gained little with all his toil, yet has sanctified his little by prayer and has thanked his Father for what he had. And though he does not know whether he will have more, still he trusted in God and declared that his faith should not fail him, though Providence should run to a lower ebb than he had ever seen. There is “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

I have seen that peace, too, in the case of those who have lost their friends. There is a Peridot—her much loved husband lies in the coffin. She is soon to part with him. Parted with him she has before. But now, of his poor clay-cold corpse—even of that she has to be bereaved. She looks upon it for the last time and her heart is heavy. For herself and her children she wonders how they shall be provided for. That broad tree that once sheltered them from the sunbeam has been cut down. Now, she thinks, there is a broad Heaven above her head and her Maker is her Husband. The fatherless children are left with God for their Father and the widow is trusting in Him.

With tears in her eyes she still looks up and she says, “Lord, You have given and You have taken away, blessed be Your name.” Her husband is carried to the tomb. She does not smile. And though she weeps there is a calm composure on her brow and she tells you she would not have it otherwise, even if she could—for Jehovah’s will is right. There, again, is “the peace of God that passes all understanding.”

Picture another man. There is Martin Luther standing up in the midst of the Diet of Worms. There are the kings and the princes and there are the bloodhounds of Rome with their tongues thirsting for his blood. There is Martin rising in the morning as comfortable as possible and he goes to the Diet and delivers himself of the Truth. He solemnly declares that the things which he has spoken are the things which he believes, and God helping him, he will stand by them till the last. There is his life in his hands. They have him entirely in their power. The smell of John Huss’ corpse has not yet passed away and he recollects that princes before this have violated their words. But there he stands, calm and quiet. He fears no man, for he has nothing to fear. “The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Jesus Christ.”

There is another scene. There is John Bradford in Newgate. He is to be burned the next morning in Smithfield and he swings himself on the bedpost in very glee and delights—for tomorrow is his wedding day! And he says to another, “Fine shining we shall make tomorrow, when the flame is kindled.” And he smiles and laughs and enjoys the very thought that he is about to wear the bloodied crown of martyrdom. Is Bradford mad! Ah, no. But he has got the peace of God that passes all understanding.

But perhaps the most beautiful, as well as the most common illustration of this great peace is the dying bed of the Believer. Oh, Brethren, you have seen this sometimes—that calm, quiet serenity. You have said, Lord, let us die with him. It has been so good to be in that solitary chamber where all was quiet and so still. All the world shut out and Heaven shut in. And the poor heart nearing its God and far away from all its past burdens and griefs—now nearing the portals of eternal bliss. And you have said, “How is this? Is not death a black and grim thing? Are not the terrors of the grave things which make the strong man tremble?”

Oh yes, they are. But, then, this one has the “peace of God which passes all understanding.” However, if you want to know about this, you must be a child of God and possess it yourselves. And when you have once felt it, when you can stand calm amid the bewildering cry, confident of victory—when you can sing in the midst of the storm, when you can smile when surrounded by adversity and can trust your God, be your way ever so rough, ever so stormy—when you can always repose confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah—then it is you will have “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

II. Thus we have discussed the first point, what is this peace? Now the second thing was, how Is THIS PEACE TO BE OBTAINED? You will note that although this is a Promise, it has precepts preceding and it is only by the practice of the precepts that we can get the Promise. Turn now to the fourth verse and you will see the first rule and regulation for getting peace. Christian, would you enjoy “the peace of God which passes all understanding”?

The first thing you have to do is to “rejoice evermore.” The man who never rejoices but who is always sorrowing and groaning and crying—the man who forgets his God, who forgets the fullness of Jehovah and is always murmuring concerning the trials of the road and the infirmities of the flesh—that man will lose the prospect of enjoying a peace that passes all understanding. Cultivate, my Friends, a cheerful disposition. Endeavor, as much as lies in you, always to bear a smile about with you. Recollect that this is as much a command of God as that one which says, “You shall love the Lord with all your heart.” Rejoice evermore is one of God’s commands. And it is your duty, as well as your privilege, to try and practice it. Not to rejoice, remember, is a sin. To rejoice is a duty and such a duty that the richest fruits and the best rewards are appended to it.

Rejoice always and then the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds. Many of us, by giving way to disastrous doubts, spoil our peace. It is as I once remember to have heard a woman say, when I was passing down a lane. A child stood crying at the door and I heard her calling out, “Ah, you are crying for nothing. I will give you something to cry for.” Brethren, it is often so with God’s children. They get to crying for nothing. They have a miserable disposition, or a turn of mind always making miseries for themselves and thus they have something to cry for. Their peace is disturbed. Some sad trouble comes. God hides His face and then they lose their peace. But keep on singing, even when the sun does not keep on shining. Keep a song for all weathers. Get a joy that will stand clouds and storms. And then, when you know how always to rejoice, you shall have this peace.

The next precept is, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” If you would have peace of mind, be moderate. Merchant, you cannot push that speculation too far and then have peace of mind. Young man, you cannot be so fast in trying to rise in the world and yet have the peace of God which passes all understanding. You must be moderate and when you have got a moderation in your desires, then you shall have peace. Sir, you with the red cheek, you must be moderate in your anger. You must not be quite so fast in flying into a passion with your fellows and not quite so long in getting cool again—because the angry man cannot have peace in his conscience.

Be moderate in that. Let your vengeance stay itself. But if you give way to wrath—if you are angry—“be you angry and sin not.” Be moderate in this. Be moderate in all things which you undertake, Christian—moderate in your expectations. Blessed is he who expects little, for he shall have but little disappointment. Remember never to set your desires very high. He that has aspirations to the moon, will be disappointed if he only reaches half as high. Whereas, if he had aspired lower, he would be agreeably disappointed when he found himself mounting higher than he first expected. Keep moderation, whatsoever you do, in all things—but in your desires after God. And so shall you obey the second precept and get the glimpse of this Promise—“The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

The last precept that you have to obey is, “be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God.” You cannot have peace unless you turn your troubles up. You have no place in which to pour your troubles except the ear of God. If you tell them to your friends, you but put your troubles out a moment and they will return again. If you tell them to God, you put your troubles into the grave. They will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else it will roll back again, just like the stone of Sisyphus. But just roll your burden unto God and you have rolled it into a great deep, out of which it will never by any possibility rise.

Cast your troubles where you have cast your sins. You have cast your sins into the depth of the sea, there cast your troubles also. Never keep a trouble half an hour on your own mind before you tell it to God. As soon as the trouble comes—quick, the first thing—tell it to your Father. Remember, that the longer you take telling your trouble to God the more your peace will be impaired. The longer the frost lasts, the more thick the ponds will be frozen. Your frost will last till you go to the sun. And when you go to God—the Sun—then your frost will soon become a thaw and your troubles will melt away. But do not be long because the longer you are in waiting the longer will your trouble be in thawing afterwards. Wait a long while till your trouble gets frozen thick and firm and it will take

many a day of prayer to get your trouble thawed again.

Away to the Throne as quick as ever you can. Do as the child did when he ran and told his mother as soon as his little trouble happened to him. Run and tell your Father the first moment you are in affliction. Do this in everything, in every little thing—“in everything by prayer and supplication make known your wants unto God.” Take your husband’s headache, take your children’s sicknesses, take all things. Little family troubles as well as great commercial trials—take them all to God. Pour then all out at once. And so by an obedient practice of this command in everything making known your wants unto God, you shall preserve that peace “which shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ.”

These, then, are the precepts. May God the Holy Spirit enable us to obey them and we shall then have the continual peace of God.  
III. Now, the third thing was to show HOW THE PEACE, which I attempted to describe in the first place, KEEPS THE HEART. You will clearly see how this peace will keep the heart full. That man who has continued peace with God will not have an empty heart. He feels that God has done so much for him that he must love his God. The eternal basis of his peace lies in Divine election—the solid pillars of his peace, the incarnation of Christ—His righteousness, His death—the climax of his peace, the Heaven hereafter where his joy and his peace shall be consummated. All these are subjects for grateful reflection and will, when meditated upon, cause more love. Now, where much love is, there is a large heart and a full one. Keep, then, this peace with God and you will keep your heart full to the brim.  
And remember that in proportion to the fullness of your heart will be the fullness of your life. Be empty-hearted and your life will be a meager, skeleton existence. Be full-hearted and your life will be full, fleshy, gigantic, strong—a thing that will tell the whole world. Keep, then, your peace with God firm within you. Keep close to this, that Jesus Christ has made peace between you and God. And keep your conscience still. Then shall your heart be full and your soul strong to do your Master’s work.  
Keep your peace with God. This will keep your heart pure. You will say, if temptation comes, “What do you offer me? You offer me pleasure—lo, I have got it. You offer me gold—lo, I have got it. All things are mine, the gift of God. I have a city that hands have not made, ‘a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ I will not barter this for your poor gold.” “I will give you honor,” says Satan. “I have honor enough,” says the peaceful heart. “God will honor me in the last great day of His account.” “I will give you everything that you can desire,” says Satan. “I have everything that I can desire,” says the Christian—  
*“I want nothing on earth;  
Happy in my Savior’s love,  
I am at peace with God.”*  
“Away, then, Satan! While I am at peace with God, I am a match for all your temptations. You offer me silver—I have gold. You bring before me the riches of the earth—I have something more substantial than these. Away, Tempter of human kind! Away, you Fiend! Your temptations and blandishments are lost on one who has peace with God.” This peace, too, will keep the heart undivided. He who has peace with God will set his whole heart on God. “Oh,” he says, “why should I go to seek anything else on earth, now that I have found my rest in God? As the bird by wandering, so should I be if I went elsewhere.  
“I have found a fountain. Why should I go and drink at the broken cistern that will hold no water? I lean on the arm of my Beloved. Why should I rest on the arm of another? I know that religion is a thing worth my following. Why should I leave the pure snows of Lebanon to follow something else? I know and feel that religion is rich when it brings forth to me a hundredfold the fruits of peace. Why should I go and sow elsewhere? I will be like the maiden Ruth, I will stop in the fields of Boaz. Here will I ever stay and never wander.”  
Again, this peace keeps the heart rich. My hearers will notice that I am passing over the heads of the morning’s discourse and showing how this peace fulfils the requisites that we thought necessary in the morning. Peace with God keeps the heart rich. The man who doubts and is distressed has got a poor heart. It is a heart that has nothing in it. But when a man has peace with God, his heart is rich. If I am at peace with God I am enabled to go where I can get riches. The Throne is the place where God gives riches. If I am at peace with Him, then I can have access with boldness.  
Meditation is another and a great field of enrichment. When my heart is at peace with God, then I can enjoy meditation. But if I have not peace with God, then I cannot meditate profitably. For “the birds come down on the sacrifice,” and I cannot drive them away unless my soul is at peace with God. Hearing the Word is another way of getting rich. If my mind is disturbed I cannot hear the Word with profit. If I have to bring my family into the Chapel, if I have to bring my business, my ships, or my horses, I cannot hear. When I have cows and dogs and horses in the pew, I cannot hear the Gospel preached. When I have got a whole week’s business and a ledger on my heart, I cannot hear.  
But when I have peace—peace concerning all things and rest in my Father’s will—then I can hear with pleasure and every Word of the Gospel is profitable to me. For my mouth is empty and I can fill it with the heavenly treasures of His Word. So you see, the peace of God is a soul-enriching thing. And because it keeps the heart rich, thus it is it keeps the heart and mind through Jesus Christ our Lord. I need hardly say that the peace of God fulfils the only other requisite which I did not mention, because it was unnecessary to do so. It keeps the heart always peaceable. Of course, peace makes it full of peace—peace like a river and righteousness like the waves of the sea.  
Now, then, Brothers and Sisters, it is of the first importance that you keep your heart right. You cannot keep your heart right but by one way. That one way is by getting, maintaining and enjoying peace of God to your own conscience. I beseech you then, you that are professors of religion, do not let this night pass over your heads till you have a confident assurance that you are now the possessor of the peace of God. For let me tell you, if you go out to the world Monday morning without first having peace with God in your own conscience, you will not be able to keep your heart during the week. If this night, before you rest, you could say that with God as well as all the world you are at peace, you may go out tomorrow and whatever your business I am not afraid for you.  
You are more than a match for all the temptations to false doctrine, to false living, or to false speech that may meet you. For he that has peace with God is armed. He is covered from head to foot in a panoply. The arrow may fly against it but it cannot pierce it, for peace with God is a mail so strong that the broad sword of Satan itself may be broken in two before it can pierce the flesh. Oh, take care that you are at peace with God! For if you are not, you ride forth to tomorrow’s fight unarmed, naked. And God help the man that is unarmed when he has to fight with Hell and earth. Oh, be not foolish—“Put on the whole armor of God” and then be confident, for you need not fear.  
As for the rest of you, you cannot have peace with God because “there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.” How shall I address you? As I said this morning, I cannot exhort you to keep your hearts. My best advice to you is to get rid of your heart. And as soon as you can, get new ones. Your prayer should be, “Lord, take away my stony heart and give me a heart of flesh.” But though I cannot address you from this text, I may address you from another. Though your heart is bad, there is another heart that is good. And the goodness of that heart is a ground of exhortation to you.  
You remember Christ said, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden.” And then His argument would come to this, “for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest to your souls.” Your heart is proud and high and black and lustful. But look at Christ’s heart—it is meek and lowly. There is your encouragement! Do you feel tonight your sin? Christ is meek. If you come to Him He will not spurn you. Do you feel your insignificance and worthlessness? Christ is lowly. He will not despise you. If Christ’s heart were like your heart, you would be damned for sure. But Christ’s heart is not as your heart, nor His ways like your ways. I can see no hope for you when I look into your hearts—but I can see plenty of hope when I look into Christ’s heart.  
Oh, think of His blessed heart! And if you go home tonight, by God’s grace, sad and sorrowful, under a sense of sin—when you go to your chamber, shut your door—you need not be afraid—and talk to that heart so meek and lowly. And though your words be ungrammatical and your sentences incoherent, He will hear and answer you from Heaven, His dwelling place. And when He hears, He will forgive and accept, for His own name’s sake.

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CONTENTMENT  
NO. 320

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MARCH 25, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“For I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”** *Php 4:11***.**

THE Apostle Paul was a very learned man, but not the least among his manifold acquisitions in science was this—he had learned to be content. Such learning is far better than much that is acquired in the schools. Their learning may look studiously back on the past, but too often those who cull the relics of antiquity with enthusiasm are thoughtless about the present and neglect the practical duties of daily life. Their learning may open up dead languages to those who will never derive any living benefit from them. Far better the learning of the Apostle. It was a thing of everpresent utility and alike serviceable for all generations—one of the rarest—but one of the most desirable accomplishments.

I put the senior wrangler and the most learned of our Cambridge men in the lowest form, compared with this learned Apostle, for this surely is the highest degree in humanities to which a man can possibly attain—to have learned in whatever state he is—to be content. You will see at once from reading the text, upon the very surface, that contentment in all states is not a natural propensity of man. Ill weeds grow apace— covetousness, discontent and murmuring—are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil. You have no need to sow thistles and brambles. They come up naturally enough, because they are native to earth, upon which rests the curse. So you have no need to teach men to complain, they complain fast enough without any education.

But the precious things of the earth must be cultivated. If we would have wheat, we must plow and sow. If we want flowers, there must be the garden and all the gardener’s care. Now, contentment is one of the flowers of Heaven and if we would have it, it must be cultivated. It will not grow in us by nature. It is the new nature, alone, that can produce it and even then we must be specially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate the grace which God has sown in it.

Paul says, “I have learned to be content.” As much as to say he did not know how at one time. It do him some pains to attain to the mystery of that great truth. No doubt he sometimes thought he had learned and then broke down, Frequently too, like boys at school, he had his knuckles rapped. Frequently he found that it was not easy learning this task and when at last he had attained unto it and could say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” he was an old gray-headed man upon the borders of the grave—a poor prisoner shut up in Nero’s dungeon at Rome.

We, my Brethren, might well be willing to endure Paul’s infirmities and share the cold dungeon with him, if we, too, might by any means attain unto such a degree of contentment. Do not indulge, any of you, the silly

notion that you can be contented without learning, or learn without discipline. It is not a power that may be exercised naturally, but a science to be acquired gradually. The very words of the text might suggest this, even if we did not know it from experience. We need not be taught to rumor, but we must be taught to acquiesce in the will and good pleasure of the Lord our God. When the Apostle had uttered these words, he immediately gave a commentary upon them. Read the 12th verse, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry both to abound and to suffer need.”

Notice first, that the Apostle said he knew how to be abased. A wonderful knowledge this. When all men honor us, then we may very well be content. But when the finger of scorn is pointed at us, when our character is held in ill repute and men hiss us by the wayside, it requires much Gospel knowledge to be able to endure that with patience and with cheerfulness. When we are increasing and growing in rank and honor and human esteem, it is easy work to be contented. But when we have to say with John the Baptist, “I must decrease,” or when we see some other servant advanced to our place and another man bearing the palm we had longed to hold, it is not easy to sit still and without an envious feeling cry with Moses, “Would to God that all the Lord’s servants were Prophets.”

To hear another man praised at your own expense, to find your own virtues made as a foil to set forth the superior excellence of some new rival—this, I say, is beyond human nature—to be able to bear it with joy and thankfulness and to bless God. There must be something noble in the heart of the man who is able to lay all his honors down as willingly as he took them up. When he can as cheerfully submit himself to Christ to humble him, as to lift him up and seat him upon a throne. And yet, my Brethren, we have not anyone of us learned what the Apostle knew, if we are not as ready to glorify Christ by shame, by ignominy and by reproach, as by honor and by esteem among men. We must be ready to give up everything for him. We must be willing to go downwards, in order that Christ’s name may ascend upwards and be the better known and glorified among men. “I know how to be abased,” says the Apostle.

His second piece of knowledge is equally valuable, “I know how to abound.” There are a great many men that know a little about how to be abased, that do not know at all how to abound. When they are put down into the pit with Joseph, they look up and see the starry promise and they hope for an escape. But when they are put on the top of a pinnacle, their heads grow dizzy and they are ready to fall. When they were poor they used to battle it, as one of our great national poets has said—

*“Yet many things, impossible to thought, Have been by need to full perfection brought. The daring of the soul proceeds from thence, Sharpness of wit and active diligence;  
Prudence at once and fortitude it gives; And, if in patience taken, mends our lives.”*

But mark the same men after success has crowned their struggles— their troubles are over. They are rich and increased with goods. And have you not often seen a man who has sprung up from nothing to wealth— how purse-proud he becomes, how vain, how intolerant? Nobody would have thought that man ever kept a shop. You would not believe that man at any time ever used to sell a pound of candles, would you? He is so great in his own eyes, that one would have thought the blood of all the Caesars must flow in his veins. He does not know his old acquaintances. The familiar friend of other days he now passes by with scarce a nod of recognition.

The man does not know how to abound. He has grown proud. He is exalted above measure. There have been men who have been lifted up for a season to popularity in the Church. They have preached successfully and done some mighty work. For this the people have honored them, and rightly so. But then they have become tyrants. They have lusted after authority. They have looked down contemptuously upon everybody else, as if other men were small pigmies and they were huge giants. Their conduct has been intolerable and they have soon been cast down from their high places, because they did not know how to abound.

There was once a square piece of paper put up into George Whitfield’s pulpit, by way of a notice, to this effect—“A young man who has lately inherited a large fortune, requests the prayers of the congregation.” Right well was the prayer asked, for when we go up the hill we need prayer that we may be kept steady. Going down the hill of fortune there is not half the fear of stumbling. The Christian far oftener disgraces his profession in prosperity than when he is being abased.

There is another danger—the danger of growing worldly. When a man finds that his wealth increases it is wonderful how gold will stick to his fingers. The man who had just enough thought if he had more than he required he would be exceedingly liberal. With a shilling purse he had a guinea heart—but now with a guinea purse he has a shilling heart. He finds that the money adheres and he cannot get it off.

You have heard of the spider that is called a “money spinner.” I do not know why it is called so, except that it is one of the sort of spiders you cannot get off your fingers. It gets on one hand, then on the other hand, then on your sleeve. It is here and there. You cannot get rid of it unless you crush it outright—so is it with many who abound.

Gold is a good thing when put to use—the strength, the sinews of commerce and of charity—but it is a bad thing in the heart and begets “foul-cankering rust.” Gold is a good thing to stand on, but a bad thing to have about one’s loins, or over one’s head. It matters not, though it be precious earth with which a man is buried alive. Oh, how many Christians have there been who seemed as if they were destroyed by their wealth! What leanness of soul and neglect of spiritual things have been brought on through the very mercies and bounties of God!

Yet this is not a matter of necessity, for the Apostle Paul tells us that he knew how to abound. When he had much, he knew how to use it. He had asked of God that he might be kept humble—that when he had a full sail he might have plenty of ballast—that when his cup ran over he might not let it run to waste—that in his time of plenty he might be ready to give to those that needed—and that as a faithful steward he might hold all he had at the disposal of his Lord. This is Divine learning. “I know both how

to be abased and I know how to abound.”

The Apostle goes on to say, “everywhere and in all things l am instructed both to be full and to be hungry.” It is a Divine lesson, let me say, to know how to be full. For the Israelites were full once and while the flesh was yet in their mouths the wrath of God come upon them. And there have been many that have asked for mercies that they might satisfy their own heart’s lust. As it is written, “the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” Fullness of bread has often made fullness of blood and that has brought on wantonness of spirit. When men have too much of God’s mercies—strange that we should have to say this, and yet it is a great fact—when men have much of God’s providential mercies—it often happens that they have but little of God’s grace and little gratitude for the bounties they have received.

They are full and they forget God. Satisfied with earth, they are content to do without Heaven. Rest assured, my dear Hearers, it is harder to know how to be full than it is to know how to be hungry. To know how to be hungry is a sharp lesson, but to know how to be full is the harder lesson after all. So desperate is the tendency of human nature to pride and forgetfulness of God! As soon as ever we have a double stock of manna and begin to hoard it, it breeds worms and becomes a stench in the nostrils of God. Take care that you ask in your prayers that God would teach you how to be full.

The Apostle knew still further how to experience the two extremes of fullness and hunger. What a trial that is! To have one day a path strewn with mercies and the next day to find the soil beneath you barren of every comfort. I can readily imagine the poor man being contented in his poverty, for he has been accustomed to it. He is like a bird that has been born in a cage and does not know what liberty means. But for a man who has had much of this world’s goods and thus has been full—to be brought to absolute penury—he is like the bird that once soared on highest wing but is now encaged. Those poor larks you sometimes see in the shops always seem as if they would be looking up and they are constantly pecking at the wires, fluttering their wings and wanting to fly away.

So will it be with you unless grace prevents it. If you have been rich and are brought down to be poor, you will find it hard to know “how to be hungry.” Indeed, my Brethren, it must be a sharp lesson. We complain sometimes of the poor, that they murmur. Ah, we should murmur a great deal more than they do, if their lot fell to us. To sit down at the table where there is nothing to eat and five or six little children crying for bread, were enough to break the father’s heart. Or for the mother, when her husband has been carried to the tomb—to gaze round on the gloomstricken home—press her new-born infant to her bosom and look upon the others, with widowed heart remembering that they are without a father to seek their livelihood. Oh, it must need much grace to know how to be hungry.

And for the man who has lost a situation and has been walking all over London—perhaps a thousand miles—to get a place and he cannot get one, to come home and know that when he faces his wife, her first question will be “Have you brought home any bread?” “Have you found anything to do?” and to have to tell her “No. There have been no doors open to me.” It is hard to prove hunger and bear it patiently.

I have had to admire and look with a sort of reverence on some of the members of this Church, when I have happened to hear afterwards of their privations. They would not tell anyone. And they would not come to me. But they endured their pangs in secret, struggled heroically through all their difficulties and dangers and came out more than conquerors. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, it looks an easy lesson when you come to see it in a book but it is not quite so easy when you come to put it in practice. It is hard to know how to be full, but it is a sharp thing to know how to be hungry. Our Apostle had learned both—both “how to abound and to suffer need.”

Having thus expounded to you the Apostle Paul’s own commentary, in enlarging upon the words of my text let me return to the passage itself. You may now ask by what course of study did he acquire this peaceful frame of mind? And of one thing we may be quite certain—it was by no stoic process of self-government but simply and exclusively by faith in the Son of God.

You may easily imagine a nobleman whose home is the abode of luxury traveling through foreign parts for purposes of scientific discovery, or going forth to command some military expedition in the service of his country. In either case he may be well content with his fare and feel that there is nothing to repine at. And why? Because he had no right to expect anything better. Not because it bore any comparison with his rank, his fortune, or his social position at home.

So our Apostle. He had said, “Our conversation or citizenship is in Heaven.” Traveling through earth as a pilgrim and stranger he was content to take travelers fare. Or entering the battle field, he had no ground of complaint that perils and distresses should sometimes encircle his path, while at other times a truce gave him some peaceful and pleasing intervals.

Again—calling attention to the text, you will notice that the word “herewith” is written in italics. If therefore we do not omit it, we need not lay upon it a heavy stress in the interpretation. There is nothing in hunger, or thirst, or nakedness, or peril to invite our contentment. It we are content under such circumstances, it must be from higher motives than our condition itself affords. Hunger is a sharp thorn when in the hands of stern necessity. But hunger may be voluntarily endured for many an hour when conscience makes a man willing to fast. Reproach may have a bitter fang, but it can be bravely endured when I am animated by a sense of the justice of my cause.

Now Paul counted that all the ills which befell him were just incident to the service of his Lord. So for the love he had for the name of Jesus, the hardships of servitude or self-mortification sat lightly on his shoulders and were brooked cheerily by his heart. There is yet a third reason why Paul was content. I will illustrate it. Many an old veteran takes great pleasure in recounting the dangers and sufferings of his past life. He looks back with more than contentment, oftentimes with self-congratulation, upon the terrible dangers and distresses of his heroic career. But the

smile that lights his eyes. and the pride that sits on his lofty wrinkled brow as he recounts his stories, were not there when he was in the midst of the scenes he is now describing. It is only since the dangers are past that the fears have subsided and the issue is complete, that his enthusiasm has been kindled to a flame.

But Paul stood on vantage ground here. “In all these things” said he, “we are more than conquerors.” Witness his voyage toward Rome. When the ship in which he sailed was caught and driven before a tempestuous wind. When darkness veiled the skies. When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, when hope failed every heart—he alone bore up with manly courage. And why? The angel of God stood by him and said, Fear not. His faith was predestinarian, and as such he had as much peaceful contentment in his breast while the tribulation lasted as when it had closed.

And now I want to commend the lesson of my text very briefly to the rich. A little more at length to the poor and then with sympathy and counsel to the sick—those who are sorely tried in their persons by suffering.

First, to the rich. The Apostle Paul says, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.” Now some of you have, as far as your circumstances are concerned, all that the heart can wish. God has placed you in such a position that you have not to toil with your hands and in the sweat of your face gain a livelihood. You will perhaps think that any exhortation to you to be contented is needless. Alas, my Brethren, a man may be very discontented though he is very rich. It is quite as possible for discontent to sit on the throne, as it is to sit on a chair—a poor brokenbacked chair in a hovel.

Remember that a man’s contentment is in his mind, not in the extent of his possessions. Alexander, with all the world at his feet, cries for another world to conquer. He is sorry because there are not other countries into which he may carry his victorious arms and wade up to his loins in the blood of his fellow men—to slake the thirst of his insatiable ambition. To you who are rich, it is necessary that we give the same exhortation as to the poor—“learn to be content.”

Many a rich man who has an estate is not satisfied because there is a little corner-piece of ground that belongs to his neighbor, like Naboth’s vineyard that the king of Israel needed that he might make a garden of herbs by his palace. “What matters it,” says he, “though I have all these acres, unless I can have Naboth’s vineyard?” Surely a king should have been ashamed to crave that paltry half-acre of a poor man’s patrimony. But yet so it is—men with vast estates which they are scarcely able to ride over may have that old horseleech in their hearts, which always cries, “Give, give! more, more!”

They thought when they had but little, that if they had ten thousand pounds it would be enough. They have it—they want twenty thousand pounds. When they have that, they still want more. Yes, and if you had it, it would be, “A trifle more!” So would it continually be. As your possessions increased, so would the host of acquiring property increase. We must, then, press upon the rich this exhortation—“Learn in your state, therewith to be content.”

Besides, there is another danger that frequently awaits the rich man. When he has enough wealth and property, he has not always enough honor. If the queen would but make him a justice of the peace for the county, how glorious would my lord become! That done, he will never be satisfied till he is a knight. And if he were a knight, he would never be content until he became a baron. And my lord would never be satisfied till he was an earl. Nor would he even then be quite content unless he could be a duke. Nor would he be quite satisfied, I think then, unless there were a kingdom for him somewhere.

Men are not easily satisfied with honor. The world may bow down at a man’s feet. Then he will ask the world to get up and bow again and so keep on bowing forever. For the lust of honor is impossible to satisfy. Man must be honored and though king Ahasuerus make Haman the first man in the empire, yet all this availed nothing, so long as Mordecai in the gate does not bow down to my lord Haman. Oh, learn, Brethren, in whatever state you are, therewith to be content.

And here, let me speak to the elders and deacons of this Church. Brethren, learn to be content with the office you hold, not envious of any superior honor to exalt yourselves. I turn to myself. I turn to the ministry. I turn to all of us in our ranks and degrees in Christ’s Church—we must be content with the honor God is pleased to confer upon us. No, let us think nothing of honor, but be content to give it all up, knowing that it is but a puff of breath after all. Let us be willing to be the servants of the Church and to serve them for nothing, if need be even without the reward of their thanks, if we but receive, at last, the right good sentence from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.

At a little more length I have to counsel the POOR. “I have learned,” says the Apostle, “in whatever state I am therewith to be content.” A very large number of my present congregation belong to those who labor hard and who, perhaps, without any unkindly reflection, may be put down in the catalogue of the poor. They have enough—barely enough and sometimes they are even reduced to straitness. Now remember, my dear Friends, you who are poor, there are two sorts of poor people in the world. There are the Lord’s poor and there are the devil’s poor.

As for the devil’s poor—they become pauperized by their own idleness, their own vice, their own extravagance. I have nothing to say to them tonight. There is another class, the Lord’s poor. They are poor through trying Providences, poor, but industrious—laboring to find all things honest in the sight of all men, but yet they still continue through an inscrutable Providence to be numbered with the poor and needy. You will excuse me, Brothers and Sisters, in exhorting you to be contented and yet, why should I ask excuse, since it is but a part of my office to stir you up to everything that is pure and lovely and of good report?

I beseech you, in your humble sphere, cultivate contentment. Be not idle. Seek, if you can, by superior skill, steady perseverance and temperate thriftiness, to raise your position. Be not so extravagant as to live entirely without care or carefulness. For he that provides not for his own

household with careful forethought, is worse than a heathen man and a publican. But at the same time, be contented. And where God has placed you, strive to adorn that position—give thanks to Him and bless His name.

And shall I give you some reasons for so doing? Remember, that if you are poor in this world so was your Lord. A Christian is a Believer who has fellowship with Christ—but a poor Christian has in his poverty a special vein of fellowship with Christ opened up to him. Your Master wore a peasant’s garb, spoke a peasant’s brogue. His companions were the toiling fishermen. He was not one who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He knew what it was to be hungry and thirsty—no, He was poorer than you—for He had not where to lay His head. Let this console you. Why should a disciple be above his Master, or a servant above his Lord?

In your poverty, moreover, you are capable of communion with Christ. You can say, “Was Christ poor? Now I can sympathize with Him in His poverty. Was He weary and did He sit thus on the well? I am weary, too, and I can have fellowship with Christ in that sweat which He wiped from His brow.” Some of your Brethren cannot go the length you can. It were wrong of them to attempt to do it, for voluntary poverty is voluntary wickedness. But inasmuch as God has made you poor, you have a facility for walking with Christ, where others cannot. You can go with Him through all the depths of care and woe and follow Him almost into the wilderness of temptation, when you are in your straits and difficulties for lack of bread. Let this always cheer and comfort you and make you happy in your poverty, because your Lord and Master is able to sympathize as well as to succor.

Permit me to remind you, again, that you should be contented because otherwise you will belie your own prayers. You kneel down in the morning and you say, “Your will be done!” Suppose you get up and want your own will and rebel against the dispensation of your heavenly Father—have you not made yourself out to be a hypocrite? The language of your prayer is at variance with the feeling of your heart. Let it always be sufficient for you to think that you are where God put you.

Have you not heard the story of the heroic boy on board the burning ship? When his father told him to stand in a certain part of the vessel, he would not move till his father bade him, but stood still when the ship was on fire. Though warned of his danger he held his ground. Until his father told him to move there would he stay. The ship was blown up and he perished in his fidelity. And shall a child be more faithful to an earthly parent than we are to our Father who is in Heaven? He has ordered everything for our good and can He be forgetful of us? Let us believe that whatever He appoints is best. Let us choose rather His will than our own. If there were two places, one a place of poverty and another a place of riches and honor—if I could have my choice, it should be my privilege to say, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Another reflection suggests itself. If you are poor you should be well content with your position, because, depend upon it, it is the fittest for you. Unerring wisdom cast your lot. If you were rich, you would not have so much grace as you have now. Perhaps God knew that if He did not make you poor, He would never get you to Heaven at all. And so He has kept you where you are, that He may conduct you there. Suppose there is a ship of large tonnage to be brought up a river and in one part of the river there is a shallow. Should someone ask, “Why does the captain steer his vessel through the deep part of the channel?” His answer would be, “Because I should not get it into harbor at all if I did not take it by this course.”

So, it may be, you would remain aground and suffer shipwreck if your Divine Captain did not always make you trace the deepest part of the water and make you go where the current ran with the greatest speed. Some plants die if they are too much exposed. It may be that you are planted in some sheltered part of the garden where you do not get so much sun as you would like, but you are put there as a plant of His own righteous planting, that you may bring forth fruit unto perfection. Remember this— had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, God would have put you there. You are put by Him in the most suitable place and if you had had the picking of your lot half an hour afterwards, you would have come back and said, “Lord, choose for me, for I have not chosen the best after all.”

You have heard, perhaps, the old fable in Aesop’s, of the men that complained to Jupiter of their burdens and the god in anger bade them everyone get rid of his burden and take the one he would like best. They all came and proposed to do so. There was a man who had a lame leg and he thought he could do better if he had a blind eye. The man who had a blind eye thought he could do better if he had to bear poverty and not blindness, while the man who was poor thought poverty the worst of ills. He would not mind taking the sickness of the rich man if he could but have his riches.

So they all made a change. But the fable said that within an hour they were all back again, asking that they might have their own burdens—they found the original burden so much lighter than the one that was taken by their own selection. So would you find it. Then be content. You cannot better your lot. Take up your cross. You could not have a better trial than you have got. It is the best for you. It sifts you the most. It will do you the most good and prove the most effective means of making you perfect in every good word and work to the glory of God.

And surely, my dear Brethren, if I need to add another argument why you should be content, it were this—whatever your trouble, it is not for long. You may have no estate on earth, but you have a large one in Heaven and perhaps that estate in Heaven will be all the larger by reason of the poverty you have had to endure here below. You may have scarcely a house to cover your head, but you have a mansion in Heaven—a house not made with hands. Your head may often lie without a pillow, but it shall one day wear a crown. Your hands may be blistered with toil, but they shall sweep the strings of golden harps. You may have to go home often to a dinner of herbs, but there you shall eat bread in the kingdom of God and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb—

*“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long,  
So we’ll smooth it with hope and cheer it with song.”*

Yet a little while, the painful conflict will be over. Courage, Beloved, courage—glittering robes for conquerors. Courage, my Brothers and Sisters, courage, you may sooner become rich than you dream of. You may go home, perhaps, shivering in the cold March wind. But before morning dawns you may be in your Master’s bosom. Bear up with your lot, then, bear up with it. Let not the child of the King, who has an estate beyond the stars, murmur as others do. You are not so poor, after all, as they are who have no hope. Though you seem poor, you are rich. Do not let your poor neighbors see you disconsolate, but let them see in you that holy calmness, that sweet resignation, that gracious submission, which makes the poor man more glorious than he that wears a coronet and lifts the son of the soil up from his rustic habitation and sets him among the princes of the blood-royal of Heaven. Be happy, Beloved, be satisfied and content. God will have you to learn, in whatever state you may be, therewith to be content.

And now just one or two words to SUFFERERS. All men are born to sorrow, but some men are born to a double portion of it. As among trees, so among men, there are different classes. The cypress seems to have been created specially to stand at the grave’s head and be a weeper. And there are some men and some women that seem to have been made on purpose that they might weep. They are the Jeremiahs of our race, they do not often know an hour free from pain. Their poor weary bodies have dragged alone through a miserable life, diseased, perhaps, even from their birth, suffering some sorrowful infirmity that will not let them know even the gaiety and the frolic of youth.

They grow up to mourning and each year’s suffering drives its plowshare deeper into their brows and they are apt—and who can blame them?—they are apt to murmur and say, “Why am I thus? I cannot enjoy the pleasures of life as others can. Why is it?” “Oh,” says some poor Sister, “consumption has looked on me. That fell disease has bleached my cheek. Why should I have to come, scarcely able to breathe, up to the House of God and after sitting here, exhausted with the heat of this crowded sanctuary, retire to my home and prepare to engage in daily labor much too heavy for me? My very bed not yielding me repose and my nights seared with visions and frightened with dreams?—why is this?”

I say if these Brothers and Sisters mourn, we are not the men to blame them, because, when we are sick, we murmur more than they. I do admire patience, because I feel myself so incapable of it. When I see a man suffering and suffering bravely, I often feel small in his presence. I wonder, yes, I admire and love the man who can bear pain and say so little about it. We who are naturally healthy and strong, when we do suffer, we can hardly endure it.

Caesar pulses like a sick girl and so do some of the strongest when they are brought down. While those who are always enduring suffering bear it like heroes—martyrs to pain and yet not uttering a complaint. There was good John Calvin, all his life a victim of sickness. He was a complication of diseases. His visage, when he was a young man, as may, indeed, be judged of from the different portraits of him, exhibited the signs of decay. And though he lived a long while, he seemed as if he were always going to die tomorrow. In the deepest of his agony, suffering from severe spinal pains and acute disease, the only cry he was ever known to utter was, “Domine usquequo?—How long, Lord? How long, Lord?”

A more repining expression than that he never used. Ah, but we get kicking against the pricks, murmuring and complaining. Brothers and Sisters, the exhortation to you is to be content. Your pains are sharp, yet, “His strokes are fewer than your crimes and lighter than your guilt.” From the pains of Hell Christ has delivered you. Why should a living man complain? As long as you are out of Hell, gratitude should mingle with your groans.

Besides, remember that all these sufferings are less than His sufferings. “Can you not watch with your Lord one hour?” He hangs upon the tree with a world’s miseries in His heart. Cannot you bear these lesser miseries that fall on you? Remember that all this chastening work for your good. They are all making you ready—every stroke of your Father’s rod is bringing you nearer to perfection. The flame does not hurt you. It only refines you and takes away your dross. Remember, too, that your pain and sickness have been so greatly blessed to you already, that you never ought to rebel. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Your Word.” You have seen more of Heaven through your sickness than you ever could have seen if you had been well.

When we are well, we are like men in a clay hut, we cannot see much light. But when disease comes and shakes the hut and dashes down the mud and makes the wall tremble and there is a crevice or two, the sunlight of Heaven shines through. Sick men can see a great deal more of Glory than men do when they are in health. This hard heart of ours, when it is undisturbed, waxes gross. When the strings of our harp are all unstrung, they make better music than when they are best wound up.

There are some Heaven-notes that never come to us but when we are shut up in the darkened chamber. Grapes must be pressed before the wine can be distilled. Furnace work is necessary to make us of any use in the world. We should be just the poorest things that can be, if we did not sometimes get sick. Perhaps you that are frequently tried and frequently pained, would have been scarcely worth anything in the vineyard of Christ if it had not been for this trial of your faith. You have sharp filing, but if you had not been well filed, you would not have been an instrument fit for the Master’s use, you would have grown so rusty.

If He had kept you always free from suffering you would have been often lacking those sweet cordials which the Physician of souls administers to His fainting patients. Be content, then, but I feel as if I hardly must say it, because I am not sick myself. When I came to you once, from the chamber of suffering, pale and thin and sick and ill, I remember addressing you from that text, that was blessed to some far away in America—“It needs be you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Then I think I might very justly have said to you, “In whatever state you are, be content.” But now that I am not suffering myself, I do not feel as if I can say it so boldly as I could then. But nevertheless, be it so, Brothers and

Sisters, try if you can and imitate this beloved Apostle Paul. “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

Before I dismiss you there is this one other sentence. You that love not Christ, remember that you are the most miserable people in the world. Though you may think yourselves happy, there is no one of us that would change places with the best of you. When we are very sick, very poor and on the borders of the grave—if you were to step in and say to us “Come, I will change places with you. You shall have my gold and my silver, my riches and my health,” and the like—there is not one living Christian that would change places with you. We would not stop to deliberate, we would give you at once our answer—“No, go your way and delight in what you have, but all your treasures are transient, they will soon pass away. We will keep our sufferings and you shall keep your gaudy toys.”

Saints have no Hell but what they suffer here on earth. Sinners will have no Heaven but what they have here in this poor troublous world. We have our sufferings here and our Glory afterwards. You may have your glory here, but you will have your sufferings forever and ever. God grant you new hearts and right spirits, a living faith in a living Jesus and then I would say to you as I have said to the rest—Man, in whatever state you are, be content.

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”** *Php 4:13***.**

THE former part of the sentence would be a piece of impudent daring without the latter part to interpret it. There have been some men who, puffed up with vanity, have in their hearts said, “I can do all things.” Their destruction has been sure and near at hand.

Nebuchadnezzar walks through the midst of the great city. He sees its stupendous tower threading the clouds. He marks the majestic and colossal size of every erection and he says in his heart, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built. I can do all things.” A few hours and he can do nothing except that in which the beast excels him. He eats grass like the oxen until his hair has grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

See, too, the Persian potentate. He leads a million men against Grecia, he wields a power which he believes to be omnipotent, he lashes the sea, casts chains upon the wave and bids it be his slave. Ah, foolish pantomime—“I can do all things!” His hosts melt away, the bravery of Grecia is too much for him—he returns to his country in dishonor. Or, if you will take a modern instance of a man who was born to rule and govern and found his way upwards from the lowest ranks to the highest point of empire, call to mind Napoleon.

He stands like a rock in the midst of angry billows. The nations dash against him and break themselves. He, himself puts out the sun of Austria and bids the star of Prussia set. He dares to proclaim war against all the nations of the earth and believes that he, himself shall be a very Briarius with a hundred hands attacking at once a hundred antagonists. “I can do all things,” he might have written upon his banners. It was the very note which his eagles screamed amid the battle.

He marches to Russia, he defies the elements. He marches across the snow and sees the palace of an ancient monarch in flames. No doubt, as he looks at the blazing Kremlin, he thinks, “I can do all things.” But you shall come back to your country alone, you shall strew the frozen plains with men. You shall be utterly wasted and destroyed. Inasmuch as you have said, “I propose and dispose, too,” let Jehovah disposes of you and put you from your seat, seeing you have arrogated to yourself omnipotence among men.

And what shall we say to our Apostle, little in stature, stammering in speech, his personal presence weak and his speech contemptible—when he comes forward and boasts, “I can do all things?” O impudent presumption! What can you do, Paul? The leader of a hated sect, all of them doomed by an imperial edict to death! You, you, who dare to teach the absurd dogma that a crucified Man is able to save souls, that He is

actually King in Heaven and virtually King on earth! You say, “I can do all things.”

What? Has Gamaliel taught you such an art of eloquence, that you can baffle all that oppose you? What? Have your sufferings given you so stern a courage that you are not to be turned away from the opinions which you have so tenaciously held? Is it in yourself you rely? No. “I can do all things,” says he, “through Christ which strengthens me.” Looking boldly around him he turns the eye of his faith humbly towards his God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and dares to say, not impiously, nor arrogantly, yet with devout reverence and dauntless courage, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

My Brethren, when Paul said these words, he meant them. Indeed, he had to a great measure already proved the strength of which he now asserts the promise. Have you ever thought how varied were the trials and how innumerable the achievements of the Apostle Paul? Called by grace in a sudden and miraculous manner, immediately—not consulting with flesh and blood—he essays to preach the Gospel he has newly received. Then he retires a little while, that he may more fully understand the Word of God.

From the desert of Arabia, where he has girded his loins and strengthened himself by meditation and personal mortification, he comes out. Not taking counsel with the Apostles, nor asking their guidance or their approbation, but at once, with singular courage, proclaiming the name of Jesus and proclaiming that he, himself, also is an Apostle of Christ. You will remember that after this he undertook many difficult things—he withstood Peter to his face—no easy task with a man so bold and so excellent as Peter was, but Peter might be a timeserver—Paul never. Paul rebukes Peter, even to his face.

And then mark his own achievements, as he describes them himself, “In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure.” “In prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. Journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false Brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in marches often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which comes upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.”

Ah, bravely spoken, Beloved Paul. Yours was no empty boast. You have, indeed, in your life, preached a sermon upon the text, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

And now, my dear Friends, looking up to Christ which strengthens me, I shall endeavor to speak of my text under three heads. First, the measure of it. Secondly, the manner of it. And thirdly, the message of it.

I. As for THE MEASURE OF IT. It is exceeding broad, for it says, “I can do all things.” We cannot, of course, mention “all things,” this morning. For the subject is illimitable in its extent. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

But let us notice that Paul here meant that he could endure all trials. It matters not what suffering his persecutors might put upon him, he felt that he was quite able through Divine Grace to bear it. And no doubt though Paul had seen the inside of almost every Roman prison, yet he had never been known to quake in any one of them. Though he understood well the devices which Nero had invented to put torment upon Christians—he had heard, in his cell, no doubt, of those who were smeared with pitch and set on fire in Nero’s gardens to light his festivities. He had heard of Nero’s racks and chains and hot pincers, yet he felt persuaded that rack and pincers and boiling pitch, would not be strong enough to break his faith. “I can endure all things,” he says “for Christ’s sake.”

He daily expected that he might be led out to die and the daily expectation of death is more bitter than death itself, for what is death? It is but a pang and it is over. But the daily expectation of it is fearful. If a man fears death he feels a thousand deaths in fearing one. But Paul could say, “I die daily,” and yet he was still steadfast and immovable in the hourly expectation of a painful departure. He was ready to be offered up and made a sacrifice for his Master’s cause.

Every child of God, by faith, may say, “I can suffer all things.” What, though today we are afraid of a little pain, though perhaps the slightest shooting pang alarms us—yet I do not doubt, if days of martyrdom should return—the martyr spirit would return with martyrs’ trials. And if once more Smithfield’s fires needed victims, there would be victims found innumerable—holocausts of martyrs would be offered up before the shrine of the Truth of God. Let us be of good courage under any temptation or suffering we may be called to bear for Christ’s sake, for we can suffer it all through Christ who strengthens us.

Then Paul meant also that he could perform all duties. Was he called to preach? He was sufficient for it, through the strength of Christ. Was he called to rule and govern in the Churches—to be, as it were, a traveling over looker and bishop of the flock? He felt that he was well qualified for any duty which might be laid upon him, because of the strength which Christ would surely give. And you, too, my dear Brother, if you are called this day to some duty which is new to you, be not behind the Apostle, but say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

I have seen the good man disappointed in his best hopes—because he has not won the battle in the first charge, he lays down his arms saying, “I feel that I can do no good in this world. I have tried, but defeat awaits me. Perhaps it were better that I should be still and do no more.” I have seen the same man, too, for a while lie down and faint, “Because,” said he, “I have sown much, but I have reaped little. I have strewed the seed by handfuls, but I have gathered only here and there an ear of precious grain.”

O be not a coward—play the man. Christ puts His hand upon your loins today and He says, “Up and be doing.” And do you reply, “Yes, Lord, I will be doing, for I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” I am persuaded there is no work to which a Christian can be called

for which he will not be found well qualified. If his master should appoint him to a throne, he would rule well, or should He bid him play the menial part he would make the best of servants—in all places and in all duties the Christian is always strong enough, if the Lord his God is with him. Without Christ he can do nothing, but with Christ he can do all things.

This is also true of the Christian’s inward struggles with his corruptions. Paul, I know, once said, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But Paul did not stay there—his music was not all in a minor key. Right quickly he mounts the higher chords and sings, “But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I may be addressing some Christians who have naturally a very violent temper and you say you cannot curb it. “You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you.”

I may be speaking to another who has felt a peculiar weakness of disposition, a proneness to be timid and yielding. My Brother, you shall not disown your Lord, for through Christ that strengthens you, the dove can play the eagle and you who are timid as a lamb can be mighty and courageous as a lion. There is no weakness or evil propensity which the Christian cannot overcome. Do not come to me and say, “I have striven to overcome my natural slothfulness, but I have not been able to do it.” I do declare, Brother, that if Christ has strengthened you, you can do it.

I don’t believe there exists anywhere under Heaven a more lazy man than myself naturally. I would scarce stir if I had my will, but if there is a man under Heaven who works more than I do, I wish him well through his labors. I have to struggle with my sloth, but through Christ who strengthens me, I overcome it. Do not say you have a physical incapacity for strong effort. My Brothers and Sisters, you have not. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

A brave heart can master even a sluggish life. Often do I find Brethren who say, “I hope I am not too timid or too rash in my temper, or that I am not idle, but I find myself inconstant, I cannot persevere in anything.” My dear Brothers and Sisters, you can. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Do not sit down and excuse yourself by saying, “Another man can do this, but I cannot. The fact is, I was made with this fault—it was in the mold originally and it cannot be gotten rid of, I must make the best I can of it “

You can get rid of it, Brother, there is not a Hittite or a Jebusite in all Canaan that you cannot drive out. You can do nothing of yourself, but Christ being with you, you can make their high walls fall flat even as the walls of Jericho. You can go upon the tottering walls and slay the sons of Anak and although they are strong men, who like the giants had six toes on each foot and six fingers on each hand, you shall be more than a match for them all. There is no corruption, no evil propensity, no failing that you cannot overcome, through Christ which strengthens you. And there is no temptation to sin from without which you cannot also overcome through Christ which strengthens you.

Sitting one day this week with a poor aged woman who was sick, she remarked that oftentimes she was tempted by Satan. And sometimes she said, “I am a little afraid, but I do not let other people know, lest they should think that Christ’s disciples are not a match for Satan. Why, Sir,” she said, “he is a chained enemy, is he not? He cannot come one link nearer to me than Christ lets him. And when he roars ever so loudly I am not afraid with any great fear of him, for I know it is only roaring—he cannot devour the people of God.”

Now, whenever Satan comes to you with a temptation, or when your companions, or your business, or your circumstances suggest a sin, you are not timidly to say, “I must yield to this. I am not strong enough to stand against this temptation.” You are not in yourself, understand that. I do not deny your own personal weakness. But through Christ, that strengthens you, you are strong enough for all the temptations that may possibly come upon you. You may play the Joseph against lust. You need not play the David—you may stand steadfast against sin. You need not to be overtaken like Noah—you need not be thrown down to your shame, like Lot. You may be kept by God and you shall be.

Only lay hold on that Divine strength and if the world, the flesh, and the devil should beleaguer and besiege you day after day, you shall stand not only a siege as long as the siege of old Troy, but seventy years of siege shall you be able to stand and at last to drive your enemies away in confusion and make yourselves rich upon their spoils. “I can do all things through Christ.”

Though I despair of explaining the measure of my text, so as to classify even the tenth part of “all,” let me make one further attempt. I have no doubt that the Apostle specially meant that he found himself able to serve God in every state. “I know how to be abased and I know how to abound— everywhere and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Some Christians are called to sudden changes and I have marked many of them who have been ruined by their changes.

I have seen the poor man exceedingly spiritual-minded. I have seen him full of faith with regard to Divine Providence and living a happy life upon the bounty of his God, though he had but little. I have seen that man acquire wealth and I have marked that he was more stingy. That he was, in fact, more straitened than he was before. He had less trust in God, less liberality of soul. While he was a poor man he was a prince in a peasant’s garb. When he became rich, he was poor in a bad sense—mean in heart with means in hand.

But this need not be. Christ strengthening him, a Christian is ready for all places. If my Master were to call me this day from addressing this assembly to sweep a street-crossing, I know not that I should feel very contented with my lot for awhile. But I do not doubt that I could do it through Christ that strengthens me. And you, who may have to follow some very humble occupation, you have had grace enough to follow it and to be happy in it and to honor Christ in it.

I tell you, if you were called to be a king, you might seek the strength of Christ and say in this position, too, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” You ought to have no choice as to what you shall be. The day when you gave yourself up to Christ, you gave yourself up wholly to Him! To be His soldier, and soldiers must not be choosers. If

they are called to lie in the trenches, if they are bid to advance under a galling fire, they must do it. And so must you, feeling that whether He bid you do one thing or another in all states and in all circles, you can do what God will have you do, for through Him you can do all things.

To conclude upon this point, let me remind you that you can do all things with respect to all worlds. You are here in this world and can do all things in respect to this world. You can enlighten it. You can play the Jonah in the midst of this modern Nineveh. Your own single voice may be the means of creating a spiritual revival. You can do all things for your fellow men. You may be the means of uplifting the most degraded to the highest point of spiritual life. You can doubtless, by resisting temptation, by casting down high looks, by defying wrath, by enduring sufferings— walk through this world as a greater than Alexander, looking upon it all as being yours—for your Lord is the monarch of it. “You can do all things.”

Then may you look beyond this world into the world of spirits. You may see the dark gate of death. You may behold that iron gate and hear it creaking on its awful hinges. But you may say, “I can pass through that. Jesus can meet me. He can strengthen me and my soul shall stretch her wings in haste, fly fearless through death’s iron gate, nor fear the terror as she passes through. I can go into the world of spirits, Christ being with me and never fear. And then look beneath you. There is Hell, with all its demons, your sworn enemy. They have leagued and banded together for your destruction.

Walk through their ranks and as they bite their iron bonds in agony and despair, say to them as you look in their face, “I can do all things.” And if loosed for a moment, if Diabolus should meet you in the field and Apollyon should stride across the way and say, “I swear by my infernal den that you shall come no further, here will I spill your soul”—up at him! Strike him right and left, with this for your battle cry, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,” and in a little while he will spread his dragon wings and fly away.

Then mount up to Heaven. From the lowest deeps of Hell ascend to Heaven. Bow your knee before the eternal Throne. You have a message. You have desires to express and wants to be fulfilled and as you bend your knee, say, “O God, in prayer I can prevail with You. Let me wonder to tell it, I can overcome Heaven itself by humble, faithful prayer.” So you see, in all worlds—this world of flesh and blood and the world of spirits in Heaven and earth and Hell—everywhere, the Believer can say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

II. Thus have I discussed the first part of our subject—the measure. I shall now talk for awhile upon THE MANNER.  
How is it that Christ does strengthen His people? None of us can explain the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can only explain one effect by another. I do not pretend to be able to show how Christ communicates strength to His people by the mysterious in-flowing of the Spirit’s energy. Let me rather show what the Spirit does and how these acts of the Spirit, which He works for Christ, tend to strengthen the soul for “all things.”  
There is no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ makes His people strong by strengthening their faith. It is remarkable that very many poor, timid, and doubting Christians during the time of Queen Mary’s persecution were afraid, when they were arrested, that they should never bear the fire. But a singular circumstance is that these generally behaved the most bravely and played the man in the midst of the fire with the most notable constancy. It seems that God gives faith equal to the emergency and weak faith can suddenly sprout and swell and grow, till it comes to be great faith under the pressure of a great trial.  
Oh, there is nothing that braces a man’s nerves like the cold winter’s blast. And so, doubtless, the very effect of persecution through the agency of the Spirit going with it, is to make the feeble strong. Together with this faith it often happens that the Holy Spirit also gives a singular firmness of mind—I might almost call it a celestial obstinacy of spirit.  
Let me remind you of some of the sayings of the martyrs, which I have jotted down in my readings. When John Ardley was brought before Bishop Bonner, Bonner taunted him, saying, “You will not be able to bear the fire. That will convert you. The fire wood will be sharp preachers to you.” Said Ardley, “I am not afraid to try it and I tell you, Bishop, if I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all up sooner than I would give up Christ.” That same wicked wretch held the hand of poor John Tomkins over a candle, finger by finger, saying to him, “I’ll give you a taste of the fire before you shall come there,” and as the finger cracked and spurted forth, Tomkins smiled and even laughed in his tormentor’s face, being ready to suffer as much in every member as his fingers then endured.  
Jerome tells the story of a poor Christian woman, who being on the rack, cried out to her tormentors as they straitened the rack and pulled her bones asunder, “Do your worst. For I would sooner die than lie.” It was bravely said. Short, pithy words. But what a glorious utterance! What a comment! What a thrilling argument to prove our text! Verily, Christians can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. And not only does he thus give a sort of sacred tenacity and obstinacy of spirit combined with faith, but often Christians anticipate the joys of Heaven, just when their pangs are greatest.  
Look at old Ignatius. He is brought into the Roman circus and after facing the taunts of the emperor and the jeers of the multitude, the lions are let loose upon him and he thrusts his arm into a lion’s mouth, poor aged man as he is and when the bones were cracking, he said, “Now I begin to be a Christian.” Begin to be a Christian—as if he had never come near to his Master till the time when he came to die.  
And there was Gordus, a, martyr of Christ, who said when they were putting him to death, “I pray you do not spare any torments, for it will be a loss to me hereafter if you do, therefore inflict as many as you can.” What but the singular joy of God poured down from Heaven—what but some singular vials of intense bliss could have made these men almost sport with their anguish?  
It was remarked by early Christians in England, that when persecution broke out in Luther’s days, John and Henry, two Augustine monks—the first who were put to death for Christ in Germany—died singing. And Mr. Rogers, the first put to death in England for Christ, died singing, too—as if the noble army of martyrs marched to battle with music in advance. Why, who would charge in battle with groans and cries? Do not they always sound the clarion as they rush to battle, “Sound the trumpet and beat the drums, now the conquering hero comes”?  
Indeed—comes face to face with death, face to face with pain and surely they who lead the van in the midst of such heroes should sing as they come to the fires. When good John Bradford, our London martyr, was told by his keeper, that he was to be burned on the morrow, he took off his cap and said, “I heartily thank my God.” And when John Noyes, another martyr, was just about to be burned, he took up a piece of fire wood and kissed it and said, “Blessed be God that He has thought me worthy of such high honor as this.”  
And it is said of Rowland Taylor, that when he came to the fire he actually, as I think Fox says in his Monument, “fetched a frisk,” by which he means, he began to dance when he came to the flames, at the prospect of the high honor of suffering for Christ!  
But in order to enable His people to do all things, Christ also quickens the mental faculties. It is astonishing what power the Holy Spirit can bestow upon the mind of men. You will have remarked, I do not doubt, in the controversies which the ancient confessors of the faith have had with heretics and persecuting kings and bishops, the singular way in which poor illiterate persons have been able to refute their opponents.  
Jane Bouchier, our glorious Baptist martyr, the maid of Kent, when she was brought before Cranmer and Ridley, was able to non plus them entirely. Of course we believe part of her power lay in the goodness of the subject, for if there is a possibility of proving infant Baptism by any text in the Bible, I am sure I am not aware of the existence of it. Popish tradition might confirm the innovation, but the Bible knows no more of it than the Baptism of bells and the consecration of horses. But, however, she answered them all with a singular power—far beyond what could have been expected of a countrywoman.  
It was a singular instance of God’s providential judgment that Cranmer and Ridley, two bishops of the Church who condemned this Baptist to die—that she said when they signed the death-warrant, that burning was an easy death and they had themselves to try it in after days. She said, “I am as true a servant of Christ as any of you and if you put your poor sister to death, take care, lest God should let loose the wolf of Rome on you and you have to suffer for God, too.”  
How the faculties were quickened to make each confessor seize every opportunity to avail himself of every mistake of his opponent and to lay hold of texts of Scripture which were as swords to cut in pieces those who dared to oppose them, is really a matter for admiration.  
Added to this, no doubt, also, much of the power to do all things lies in the fact that the Spirit of God enables the Christian to overcome himself. He can lose all things because he is already prepared to do it. He can suffer all things, because he does not value his body as the worldling does. He can be brave for Christ because he has learned to fear God and therefore has no reason to fear man. A healthy body can endure much more fatigue and can work much more powerfully than a sick body.  
Now, Christ puts the man into a healthy state and he is prepared for long injuries, for hard duties and for stern privations. Put a certain number of men in a shipwreck. The weak and feeble shall die—those who are strong and healthy—who have not by voluptuousness become delicate, shall brave the cold and rigors of the elements and shall live. So with the quickened, yet feeble, professor. He shall soon give way under trial. But the mature Christian, the strong temperate man, can endure fatigues, can perform wonders, can achieve prodigies—because his body is well-disciplined and he has not permitted its humors to overcome the powers of the soul.  
But observe that our text does not say, “I can do all things through Christ, which has strengthened me.” It is not past, but present strength that we want. Some think that because they were converted fifty years ago they can do without daily supplies of grace. Now the manna that was eaten by the Israelites when they came out of Egypt had to be renewed every day, or else they would starve. So it is not your old experiences, but your daily experiences, not your old drinking at the well of life, but your daily refreshing from the presence of God that can make you strong to do all things.  
III. But I come now to the third part of my discourse, which is THE MESSAGE OF THE TEXT. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”  
Three distinct forms of the message—first, a message of encouragement to those of you who are doing something for Christ, but who begin to feel painfully your own inability. Cease not from God’s work, because you are unable to perform it of yourself. Let it teach you to cease from yourself, but not from your work. “Cease you from man whose breath is in his nostrils,” but cease not to serve your God. Rather in Christ’s strength do it with greater vigor than before.  
Remember Zerubbabel. A difficulty is in his path, like a great mountain, but he cries, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” If we did but believe ourselves great things, we should do great things. Our age is the age of littleness, because there is always a clamor to put down any gigantic idea. Everyone praises the man who has taken up the idea and carried it out successfully. But at the first he has none to stand by him. All the achievements in the world, both political and religious, at any time, have been begun by men who thought themselves called to perform them and believed it possible that they should be accomplished.  
A parliament of wiseacres would sit upon any new idea—sit upon it, indeed—yes, until they had destroyed it utterly. They would sit as a coroner’s inquest and if it were not dead they would at least put it to death while they were deliberating. The man who shall ever do anything is the man who says, “This is a right thing. I am called to do it. I will do it. Now, then, stand up all of you—my friends or my foes, whichever you will—it is all the same, I have God to help me and it must and shall be done.”  
Such are the men that write their records in the annals of posterity. Such the men justly called great and they are only great because they believed they could be great—believed that the exploits could be done. Applying this to spiritual things, only believe, young man, that God can make something of you, be resolved that you will do something for Christ, and you will do it. But do not go driveling through this world, saying, “I was born little.” Of course you were, but were you meant to be little and with the little feebleness of a child all your days do little or nothing? Think so and you will be little as long as you live and you will die little and never achieve anything great.  
Just send up a thought of aspiration, oh, you of little faith.! Think of your dignity in Christ—not of the dignity of your manhood—but the dignity of your regenerated manhood and say, “Can I do all things and yet am I to shrink first at this, then at that, and then at the other?” Be as David, who, when Saul said, “You are not able to fight with this Goliath,” replied, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” And he put his stone into the sling and ran cheerfully and joyously—so Goliath fell and he returned with the bloody dripping head.  
You know his brothers said at first, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart, you came to see the battle.” All our elder Brethren say that to us if we begin anything. They always say it is the naughtiness of our heart and our pride. Well, we don’t answer them. We bring them Goliath’s head and request them to say whether that is the effect of our pride and the naughtiness of our heart. We wish to know whether it would not be a blessed naughtiness that should have slain this naughty Philistine.  
So do you my, dear Brothers and Sisters. If you are called to any work, go straight at it, writing this upon your escutcheon, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me—and I will do what God has called me to do, whether I am blessed or whether I am left alone.”  
A second lesson is this—Take heed, however, that you get Christ’s strength. You can do nothing without that. Spiritually, in the things of Christ, you are not able to accomplish even the meanest thing without Him. Go not forth to your work, therefore, till you have first prayed. That effort which is begun without prayer will end without praise. That battle which commences without holy reliance upon God, shall certainly end in a terrible rout. Many men might be Christian victors, if they had known how to use  
the all-prevailing weapon of prayer. But forgetting this, they have gone to the fight and they have been defeated right easily.  
O be sure, Christian, that you get Christ’s strength! Vain is eloquence. Vain are gifts of genius. Vain is ability. Vain are wisdom and learning—all these things may be serviceable when consecrated by the power of God— but apart from the strength of Christ they shall all fail you. If you lean upon them, they shall all deceive you. If you lack the all-sufficient strength of Jesus Christ you shall be weak and contemptible, however rich or however great you may be in these things.  
Finally, the last message that I have is this—Paul says, in the name of all Christians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” I say, not in Paul’s name only, but in the name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, How is it that some of you are doing nothing? If you could do nothing you might be excused for not attempting it, but if you put in the slightest pretense to my text you must allow my right to put this question to you.  
You say, “I can do all things”—in the name of reason I ask why are you doing nothing? Look what multitudes of Christians there are in the world. Do you believe if they were all what they profess to be and all to work for Christ, there would long be the degrading poverty, the ignorance, the heathenism, which is to be found in this city? What cannot one individual accomplish? What could be done, therefore, by the tens of thousands of our Churches?  
Ah, Professors! You will have much to answer for with regard to the souls of your fellow men. You are sent by God’s Providence to be as lights in this world. But you are rather dark lanterns than lights. How often are you in company and you never avail yourself of an opportunity of saying a word for Christ? How many times are you thrown in such a position that you have an excellent opportunity for rebuking sin, or for teaching holiness—and how seldom do you accomplish it?  
An old author named Stuckley, writing upon this subject, said, “There were some professed Christians who were not so good as Balaam’s ass. For Balaam’s ass once rebuked the mad prophet for his sin. But there were some Christians who never rebuked anyone all their lives long. They let sin go on under their very eyes and yet they did not point to it. They saw sinners dropping into Hell and they stretched not out their hands to pluck them as brands, from the burning. They walked in the midst of the blind, but they would not lead them. They stood in the midst of the deaf, but they would not hear for them. They were where misery was rife, but their mercy would not work upon the misery. They were sent to be saviors of men, but by their negligence they became men’s destroyers.”  
“Am I my brother’s keeper?” was the language of Cain. Cain has many children even at this day. You are your brother’s keeper. If you have grace in your heart, you are called to do good to others. Take care lest your garments be stained and sprinkled with the blood of your fellow men. Mind, Christians, mind, lest that village in which you have found a quiet retreat from the cares of business, should rise up in judgment against you, to condemn you, because, having means and opportunity, you use the village for rest, but never seek to do any good in it.  
Take care, masters and mistresses, lest your servant’s souls be required of you at the Last Great Day. “I worked for my master, he paid me my wages, but he had no respect to his greater Master and never spoke to me, though he heard me swear and saw me going on in my sins.” Mind, I speak, Sirs, to some of you. I would I could thrust a thorn into the seat where you are now sitting and make you spring for a moment to the dignity of a thought of your responsibilities.  
Why, Sirs, what has God made you for? What has He sent you here for? Did He make stars that should not shine and suns that should give no light and moons that should not cheer the darkness? Has He made rivers that shall not be filled with water and mountains that shall not stay the clouds? Has He made even the forests which shall not give a habitation to the birds? Or has He made the prairie which shall not feed the wild flocks? And has He made you for nothing?  
Why, Man, the nettle in the corner of the Churchyard has its uses and the spider on the wall serves her Maker. And you, a man in the image of God, a blood-bought man—a man who is in the path and track to Heaven, a man regenerated, twice created—are you made for nothing at all but to buy and to sell, to eat and to drink, to wake and to sleep, to laugh and to weep, to live to yourself? Small is that man who holds himself within his ribs. Little is that man’s soul who lives within himself. Yes, so little that he shall never be fit to be a compeer with the angels and never fit to stand before Jehovah’s Throne.  
I am glad to see so large a proportion of men here. As I always have a very great preponderance of men—therefore, I suppose I am warranted in appealing to you—are there not here those who might be speakers for God, who might be useful in His service? The Missionary Societies need you, young men. Will you deny yourselves for Christ? The ministry needs you—young men who have talents and ability. Christ needs you to preach His Word. Will you not give yourselves to Him? Tradesmen! Merchants! Christ needs you to alter the strain of business and reverse the maxims of the present day—to cast a healthier tone into our commerce.  
Will you hold yourselves back? The Sunday-School needs you. A thousand agencies require you. Oh, if there is a man here today that is going home to his house and when he gets there will say this afternoon— “Thank God I have nothing to do.” And if tomorrow when you come home from your business, you say, “Thank God I have no connection with any Church—I have nothing to do with the religious world, I leave that to other people. I never trouble myself about that”—you need not trouble yourself about going to Heaven.  
You need not trouble yourself about being where Christ is—at least until you can learn that more devoted lesson—“The love of Christ constrains me. I must do something for Him. Lord, show me what You would have me to do and I will begin this very day, for I feel that through You, Christ strengthening me, I can do all things.”  
God grant the sinner power to believe on Christ—power to repent— power to be saved. For, Christ strengthening him, even the poor lost sinner, “can do all things”—things impossible to fallen nature can he do— by the enabling of the Spirit and the power of Christ resting on him.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1712 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FILLING THE EMPTY VESSELS  
NO. 1712

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1882, BY C, H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:19***.**

VERY beautiful, to my mind, is the sight of “Paul the aged” confined in his prison at Rome, likely, by-and-by, to be put to death, but calm, quiet, peaceful and joyful. Just now he is so happy that a gleam of sunlight seems to light up his cell and his face shines like that of an angel! He is exceedingly delighted because he has been, in his deep poverty, kindly remembered by the little Church at Philippi, for they have sent him a contribution. See how cheerful the man is—I was about to say, how contented, but I drop the word because it falls far short of the mark! He is far more happy than Caesar overhead in the palace. He is charmed with the love which has sent him this relief. Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin, but he makes a great deal of it and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these— “I have all things, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you.”

His heart was evidently greatly touched, for he says, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again.” See how little a gift may make a good man glad! Is it not worth while to be free with our cups of cold water to the Prophets of the Lord? Instead of a little money, the Brothers and Sisters at Philippi receive a boundless blessing and are enriched by the fervent prayers of the Apostle! Hear how earnestly Paul invokes benedictions on the heads of his benefactors! Is it not a blessed state of mind which enables a heart so soon to be full to overflowing? Some would grumble over a roasted ox, but here is Paul— rejoicing over a dinner of herbs!

So great was the disinterestedness of Paul, that there was nothing of selfishness about his joy. He did not speak in respect of need, for he knew how to suffer need without complaint. But he looked upon the kindly contribution as a fruit of the Grace of God in the Philippians—a generous proof that they were lifted out of heathen selfishness into Christian love! There was little enough of kindness in the old Roman and Greek world into which Paul went preaching the Gospel. Those were times of great hardness of heart, even to cruel heartlessness. There was no sort of provision for the poor. If a man was poor, why, that was his own problem, and he might starve and die.

You know how hardened the people had become through the fights in the amphitheater, so that the sight of blood produced a fierce delight in their brutal bosoms and human suffering was, to them, rather a thing to be rejoiced in than to be prevented. There might be, here and there, a tender hand that gave coin to the poor, but, for the most part, charity was dead. The voluptuaries of that most degenerate age planned no hospitals and built no orphanages—they were too intent upon their gladiators and their mistresses. Self was lord paramount in Caesar’s court and all over Roman realms!

But here are people at Philippi thinking about one who had preached the Gospel to them and who is now suffering. They are moved by a new principle—love to God in Christ Jesus has created love to the man whose words had changed them. They will not abandon him—they will, out of their own slender means, cheer his sad condition. There were Churches that had no such hearts of mercy, alas, that so early in the Gospel-day holy charity should be so rare! There were people whom Paul had blessed greatly, who even quarreled about him and denied that he was an Apostle of Christ! But not so the beloved Church at Philippi. They had, again and again, ministered to his necessities and Paul, now, rejoices in them, again, because he delights to see another instance of the transforming power of the Grace of God upon character, so that those who were once selfish now rejoiced, unprompted and unasked, to send their offering to him.

Was Lydia at the bottom of that subscription? I should not wonder! We know that she was open-hearted. Did the jailer add his full share? I feel sure of it, for in the prison he courteously entertained the Apostle. These were a generous people and Paul is happy in thinking of them. I may here dare to say that I, also, have had the same joy over many of you when I have seen how freely you have given of your substance to the work of the Lord. It would be unfair if I withheld commendation for liberality from many now before me. You have rejoiced my heart by your gifts to the cause of God. You have given up to the measure of your means and some of you beyond what we could have asked of you. The Gospel has taught you this. To God be glory that it is so. Continue in the same spirit, that none may rob me of this joy.

The Apostle makes to them an assurance in the following verses that they shall be abundantly repaid for all that they have done. He says to them, “You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs—my need of clothing and of food. I have other needs in which you could not help me, but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store. But my God shall supply all your need out of His riches in Glory. You have sent Epaphroditus unto me with your offering. Well and good! He is a most worthy Brother, and a true yokefellow. And for all that, God shall send a better messenger to you, for He shall supply all your needs by Christ Jesus.”

He seems to me to make a parallel of his needs with theirs, and of his supplies from them with their supplies from the Lord. He would seem to say—Just as God has, through you, filled me up, so shall He, by Christ, fill you up. That is a translation of the Greek which most nearly touches the meaning—“My God shall fill up all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Will you allow me to make a break, here, for one instant? I read you, just now, the story of the Prophet’s widow whose children were about to be taken for a debt, and how the oil was multiplied in the vessels which she borrowed until there was enough to discharge the debt, and sufficient surplus for herself and children to live upon.

Now, kindly take that picture and join it on to this—and we have here, first, the empty vessels. Set them out in a row, “all your need.” Secondly, who will fill them up?—“My God shall fill up all your need.” Thirdly, after what fashion will He do it?—“According to His riches in glory.” Fourthly, by what means will He do it?—“By Christ Jesus.” Keep the widow and the vessels before you and let us see the miracle worked over, again, on a grand scale in our own houses and hearts. May the Holy Spirit make the sight refreshing to our faith.

I. So, then, we will begin our discourse this evening by asking you to SET OUT THE EMPTY VESSELS. “My God shall supply all your need.” Bring forth your vessels, even empty vessels! “All your need.” I do not suppose that you are under any great obligation to go out, tonight, and borrow other people’s needs, for you have enough of your own at home— needs many and varied. Very well, set them out. Hide none of them away, but put them down, one after another, in a long row, all of them. There are needs for your body, needs for your soul. There are needs for yourselves, needs for your families—needs for the present, needs for the future—needs for time, needs for eternity. There are needs for earth, needs for Heaven. Your needs are as many as your moments—as many as the hairs of your head.

I suppose it would be useless for me to attempt a catalog of them— however carefully we made the list, we should have to add a host of sundries altogether unmentionable until circumstances suggested them. I could hardly tell you all my own needs, but I know that they are enormous and increasing with my years. I have needs as a man, as a husband, as a father, as a citizen, as a Christian, as a pastor, as an author— in fact, every position I take up adds to my needs. If I went through my own personal bill of requests, I could fill a document like the roll mentioned in the Old Testament, written within and without—and hardly then could I enumerate all my own demands upon the Bank of Heaven. But if I attempted to take all the thousands that are gathered beneath this roof and to let each man state his particular needs, where would the computation end? The sands upon the seashore are not more innumerable!

Dear! Dear! We would need a library larger than the Bodleian to hold all the books which could be written of all the needs of the needy congregation now before me! Well, I am not sorry for it, for here is so much the more room for the Lord to work His miracles of bountiful Grace! Sometimes, when I have been in need for the work of the Orphanage and the College and such things—and these times have occurred—I do solemnly assure you that I have felt a wonderful joy in my spirit. I have watched the ebb of the funds till nearly everything has been gone and then I have joyfully said to myself, “Now for it! The vessels are empty! Now I shall see the miracle of filling them.” What wonders the Lord has worked for me, I cannot, now, tell you in detail, but many of you who have been my faithful helpers know how hundreds and even thousands of pounds have poured in from our great Lord in the moment of necessity. It will always be the same, for the Lord God is the same.

Until the funds run low we cannot expect to see them replenished— when they get low, then will God come and deal graciously with us! Money is, however, our smallest need—we need Grace, wisdom, light and comfort—and these we shall have. All our needs are occasions for blessing. The more needs you have the more blessing you will get. God has promised to fill up all your needs. That is, all your empty vessels will be filled and, therefore, the more the merrier! What? The more in need the better? Yes, I would have your faith believe that strange statement—your poverty shall thus be your riches, your weakness your strength, your abasement your exaltation! Your extremity shall be an opportunity that God will use to show the riches of His Grace! To your utter exhaustion He will draw near with all the fullness of His inexhaustible Grace and He will replenish you till your cup runs over!

He will fill up all your empty vessels. Be not slow to fetch them out from holes and corners and place them before the Lord, however many they may be. Weep not over the empty jars, but place them out in rows in full expectation of their being filled to the brim! These empty vessels of yours are, some of them, I have no doubt, very large, and they even grow larger. Most of our needs grow upon us. You still pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” but the one loaf which was a large answer to the prayer when you were single, would not go far at your table, now—the loaves vanish like snow in the sun! You needed faith 50 years ago, but you need more, now, do you not? You have more infirmities and, perhaps, more trials than in your younger days. I know that, apart from my loving Lord, I am much more needy, now, than I ever was before. Whatever a man requires in the things of God, usually the older he grows and the more experience he has, the more he needs, and the more of it he needs.

He needs more love than he had when he was younger, more patience, more resignation, more humility, more charity, more wisdom, more holiness. He desires more faith and a brighter hope. He needs, especially in prospect of death, more courage and more bold, simple, child-like confidence in his Savior, Why, some of us have needs that could not be supplied if we could turn the stars to gold and coin them and pay them away—these could not touch the hunger of the heart and soul! The world, itself, would be but a mouthful for our spirits’ necessity—a drop in a bucket. I know some saints that have grown to be so deeply in debt to their Lord, to His Church and to the world, that they are hopelessly involved in boundless obligation.

How can we meet the demands upon us? Our responsibilities are overwhelming! All that some of us have made by our lifelong trading is a bigger stock of needs than we ever had before. The vacuum within our spirit expands and enlarges, and we cry out, “More knowledge of the Scriptures! More of Christ! More of Grace! More of God! More of the Holy Spirit! More power to serve God!” Our oil vessels would, each one, hold a sea—and even these are expanding! We need more and more, and the mercy is that the text before us keeps pace with the growth—“My God shall supply all your need.” This includes the big needs as well as the little ones! It comprehends all that can be as well as all that is! It guarantees us that our growing needs shall all be supplied. Let the vessels expand to their utmost, “Yet my God,” says Paul, “shall fill up all those needs of yours.”

Certain of our needs, again, are of this extraordinary kind, that if they were filled up, tonight, they would be empty tomorrow morning! Some of our necessities are fresh every morning. The crop is a daily one, it springs up every moment. The Grace I had five minutes ago will not serve me now. Yesterday I may have possessed great love, great faith, great courage, great humility, great joy—but I also need these today—and none can give them to me but my Lord. You had great patience under your last trial. Yes, but old patience is stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden, for the trial that is now coming can only be sweetened by the herb content, newly gathered from the garden of your heart and mixed with the bitter water of your afflictions.

Our condition apart from our God may be compared to those fabled vessels that we read of in mythology that were so full of holes that, though the 50 daughters of Danaus labored hard to fill them up, they could never accomplish the task. You and I are such leaky vessels that none but God can ever fill us! And when we are filled, none but God can keep us full. Yet so the promise stands, “My God shall supply all your need”—all the vessels shall be filled and shall be kept full! We have certain needs, dear Friends, that are very pressing and, perhaps, most clamorous at this moment. Some needs are urgent—they must be supplied, and supplied speedily—or we shall perish with hunger, or die of sickness, or wither up in despair. Here let me add a caution—I dare not tell you that God will supply all the needs of everybody, for this promise is to the children of God—and in its most emphatic sense it is only to a certain class, even, among them.

Those persons who profess to be Christians and, when they were wellto-do, never helped anybody else—I think the Lord will let them pinch a bit, and know what a condition of poverty is like that they may become more sympathetic with the poor. I have known good stewards and the Lord has sent them more, for they have dealt well with what they had. They have given away their substance by shovelfuls and the Lord has sent it back by cartloads and entrusted them with more! Others who have been bad stewards and have not served their Master well, have lost what they had, and have come to poverty. Let us hope that their substance has gone to somebody that will use it better! But, meanwhile, they have to pinch, and deservedly so.

But, remember, the Apostle is speaking to people of a very different character from that. He is speaking to the Philippians and I think that there is a point in that pronoun, “My God shall supply all your need.” You have been generous in helping the Lord’s servant and the Lord will repay you. Up to the measure of your ability you have served His Church and helped to carry on His work in the world and, therefore, God will supply all your need. This is not spoken to hoarding Judas, but to the generous who had voluntarily yielded of their substance when a fit opportunity was given them. Will any of you bring your need to God and test Him by the same conduct? Remember that old promise of His, “Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

There is that that scatters and yet increases. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Oh yes, our gracious God will fill all the vessels at once, if time presses! If your needs urgently require to be filled, bring them to Him. I began by saying that few of us had any great call to borrow other people’s empty pots. Yet there are some of us whose main anxiety is about the vessels that we have borrowed. We need more oil than others for this very reason, that we care for others. Certain of us have been called to a life which intertwists itself with many lives. We have been led by Grace and Providence to take upon ourselves the needs of thousands. Every genuine warm-hearted Christian does this, more or less. We try to make other men’s needs our own needs by working for the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the helpless. You that care for our orphan children may well join with me in prayer that the Lord will fill up all those empty vessels which we have borrowed of poor widows.

Think of my hundreds of borrowed vessels in the Orphanage and of the number in the College. Blessed be the Lord my God, He will fill up all these! Those whom we try to help in different ways, especially those we try to lead to the Savior, are like the woman’s borrowed vessels—and they are not a few! You have made their spiritual needs your own. You have come before God to pray for them as for your own soul and you shall be heard. You have talked to your neighbors and laid yourself out for their good, as if your own eternal destiny were in their stead—rest fully assured that the Lord that filled the borrowed pots in Elisha’s day will also supply your borrowed needs! “My God will fill up all your needs.” It is a blessed word! Bring out your vessels and see if it is not true!

I should like to see every Christian here setting out all his vessels in rows at once, whatever they may be. Do not put your cares away in the back room and say, “I shall draw them out tomorrow and begin worrying over them.” Instead of that, while the oil is flowing, bring them here, before the Lord, that the oil may have free course and find suitable storage. Would you limit the miracle? Have you one forgotten need? Make haste with it! Still, the oil is multiplying! Come one! Come all! Arrange your vessels and the Lord will fill up your needs, by His Grace, and fill your mouths with a song!

II. Secondly, let us enquire, WHO IS TO FILL THESE VESSELS? Paul says, “My God will supply all your need.” “My God!” Oh, that is grand! It were foolish talking if any other name were mentioned! God can supply all the needs of His people, for He is All-Sufficient—but nobody else can. He can do it without any help, for nothing is too hard for the Lord. He is able to number the myriads of His creatures and attend to the commissariat of them all, so that not one of them shall lack—“He calls them all by their names, by the greatness of His power not one fails.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing.” As for you, dear Brothers and Sisters, “trust in the Lord and do good, so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” He that promises to fill up all your empty vessels is one who can do it—there is no limit to the goodness and power of God!

Then, notice that sweet word which Paul has put before the glorious word, “God.” He writes—“My God.” As Paul looked at the money which the Philippians had sent him and, perhaps, at the warm garments that would cover him in the cold, damp jail, he cried, “See how my God has supplied me!” And then he says, “My God shall supply you.” This same God, Paul’s God—“shall fill up all your need.” Wonderfully had God protected Paul from the malice of those who sought for his life. Very wonderfully had he been carried by Divine power through unparalleled labors, so that he had been made to triumph in every place in the preaching of the Gospel! And thus Paul had learned from day to day to get a firmer grip of his God, and say, “My God!” with more and more emphasis.

Jehovah was not to Paul the unknown god, but, “My God.” With God he dwelt and in Him he reposed all his cares. This same God is our God! Think of that, poor friend, in your hour of need. Think of that, you afflicted widow woman—you have Paul’s God to go to! Think of that, dear child of God in trouble—you have the same God as Paul had and He is as much yours as He was Paul’s! His arm has not waxed short, neither has His heart grown hard towards any of His children! “My God,” says Paul, “who is also your God, will supply all your need.” Who is this God that will supply all our needs? Paul’s God, remember, was and is the God of Providence! And what a wonderful God He is.

We speak as if we were some very important part of the universe, but really, what are we? Our little island can scarcely be found upon the globe till you hunt long for it! What a tiny speck this congregation must be! But God supplies the needs of all the millions of mankind. “Mankind,” I said— but I ought to have included all the other creatures, too—the myriads of herring in the sea, the multitudes of birds that sometimes darken the sun in their migrations, the countless armies of worms and insects, strangely supplied, we know not how! And yet, “Your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Is that all the sphere of His Providence? No, far from it! I suppose that this round world of ours is but one apple in the orchard of creation, one grain of dust in the corner of God’s great palace. But all yon orbs, with all the living things that may be peopling every star, He supplies. And how? “He opens His hand and supplies the need of every living thing.” See how easy to Him is this universal provision—He does but open His hand and it is done! This is the God that will supply all your need! He calls the stars by name! He leads out Arcturus with his sons. He loosens the bands of Orion. He does great things without number—and shall He not feed and clothe you, O you of little faith? Yes, be you sure of this, the God of Providence shall supply all your needs for this life and its surroundings.

If that suffice you not, let me remind you that this God is the God of Grace, for Paul, above all men, counted Divine Grace to be his treasure— his God was the God of Grace. Chiefly He is the God who gave His Son to bleed and die for men. Oh, stand at Calvary and see God’s great Sacrifice—the gift of His only-begotten Son! And when you have marked the wounds of the Well-Beloved and seen Jesus die, answer me this—“He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?” What will He deny us who has given up the best jewel that He had, the glorious One that Heaven could not match? There was never the likes of Jesus, and yet He bowed His head to die on our behalf!

Oh, my dear, dear Friends, if you are anxious, tonight, and vexed with many cares, do think of that! It is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who says that He will fill up all your need! Do you doubt Him? Can you? Dare you distrust Him? Now, take a flight above this present cloud-land and behold the God of Heaven! Think of what God is up yonder—

*“Beyond, beyond this lower sky,  
Up where eternal ages roll,  
Where solid pleasures never die,  
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”*

Behold the splendor of God! Gold in Heaven is of no account—the streets of that city are all of pure gold like unto transparent glass! The riches and the merchandise of nations are but as rags and rottenness compared with the most common utensils of God’s great House above! There they possess inexhaustible treasures and everything that is precious, for the walls of the New Jerusalem are described as made of 12 manner of precious stones, as if these stones were so common in Immanuel’s land that they built the walls with them! The gates are each one a pearl. What pearls are those! Is God rich? Inconceivably, incalculably rich, so that He clothes the very grass of the field more gloriously than Solomon clothed himself!

What am I doing to be of a doubtful mind? Is He my Father and will He let me suffer need? What? I, starving, and my Father owning Heaven? No, no!—

*“He that has made my Heaven secure,  
Will here, all good provide  
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?  
What can I need beside?”*

My precious text is one which, years ago, when we built the Orphanage, I caused to be cut on one of the pillars of the entrance. You will notice it inside the first columns on either side whenever you go there. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This I took for the foundation of the Institution and set my seal to it as true. And it has been so! Time would fail me if I were to tell how often God has interposed, there, for His numerous family—those children that are cast upon the Divine Fatherhood. He has honored His own promise and our faith—and I believe He always will. There on the forefront of the Orphanage stands also the words—“The Lord will provide.” You shall see whether it is not so. As long as that place stands, my God shall supply our need and it shall be a standing encouragement to us all.

Think of the far more extensive orphanage of our Brother Mueller, of Bristol, with those 2,500 children living simply through prayer and faith, and yet as abundantly supplied as the Queen in her palace! Nothing is needed where God is the Provider. The Lord will supply without fail! Let us trust without fear. Go and plead this promise with the Lord your God and He will fulfill it to you as well as to the rest of His saints.

III. Now, thirdly, let us enquire IN WHAT STYLE WILL GOD SUPPLY HIS PEOPLE’S NEEDS? He will do it in such style as becomes His wealth—“according to His riches.” There are several ways of doing most things. There is more than one way of giving a penny to a beggar. You can throw it at him, if you like, or pitch it in the mud as if you threw a bone to a dog. Or you may hand it to him in a sort of huff as if you said, “Take it, and be off with you.” Or you may drag the coin out of your pocket as unwillingly as if you were losing your eye-tooth. There is yet another way— namely that which makes the copper turn to gold—by a way of doing it courteously and with kindness which expresses sympathy with the poor creature’s need. Always give good things in the best way, for your heavenly Father does so.

Now, how does God supply His children? Stingily, miserably, grudging them every penny’s worth? Certainly not! I hope that it was never your misery to dine with a grudging man who watched every mouthful that went down your throat as if there was so much the less for him! Why, when one does eat, at whatever table it may be, if it is the most common fare, one likes a welcome. It is the welcome which makes the Covenant invitation so sweet, when you hear the exhortation, “Eat, O Friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.” One enjoys the welcome of a heart which pleases all it can—like the Scot woman at a great communion meeting when there was nobody to take the people in—“Come in,” she said. “Come in! I have room for 10 of you in my house, and I have room for 10,000 of you in my heart. Come along with you. Nobody so welcome as you that have been sitting at my Master’s table with me.”

How, then, does God dispense His favors? How does He fill up the vessels? The way He does it is not according to our poverty, nor according to our merit, “but according to His riches.” He gives like a king! Brothers and Sisters, I must correct myself—He gives as God and as only God can give—according to His own God-like riches. No, that is not all. He will do it in a style consistent with His present Glory. It is “according to His riches in glory,” which means that, as rich as God is in glory, so rich is He in giving. He never demeans Himself in the mercies that He gives. He gives according to His rank and that is the highest conceivable. He gives so as to bring Him new Glory. I never heard of one of His children receiving a great blessing from Him and then saying that it did not glorify God to bestow it. No, no! The more He gives, the more glorious He is in the eyes of men!

And He delights to give, that His Glory may be seen, and that the riches of His manifested Glory may be increased. Withholding would not enrich the Lord of Heaven! Rather would it impoverish Him in Glory. But giving enriches Him with more revealed Glory and He, therefore, delights to scatter His bounty. The fact is, Brethren, God gives gloriously! The calculations of God—did you ever think of them? Well, let me say that He always calculates so as to leave something to spare, by which to illustrate the infinity of His goodness. I know that it is so. He does not give us just as much light as our eyes can take in, but He floods the world with splendor till we shade our eyes amidst the blaze of noon. After this fashion did His only-begotten Son feed the thousands when He multiplied bread and fish for them to eat. We read that “they did all eat”—no doubt they were hungry enough to do a great deal of that sort of labor! So far so good. But it is added, “and were filled.”

It takes a good deal to fill men who have come a long way into the country and have had nothing to eat for a whole day. But they were filled, fainting and famished though they had been. Yes, but do not stop there— “And they took up of the fragments 12 baskets full.” The Lord always has baskets full of leftovers remaining for the waiters. He will be sure to fill all your needs till you have no other need remaining and have provision on hand for needs not yet arrived. Will the day ever come when we shall say, “Bring yet another need for God to fill,” and the answer will be, “I have no more needs”? Then the oil of Grace will stop, but not till then! No, according to what I have said, it will not stop then, but it will go on flowing and flowing, and flowing and flowing, world without end, “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The Lord will give enough, enough for all time, enough of all, enough for all, and more than enough!

There shall be no real need of any Believer but what the Lord will fill it full and exceed it. It is a wonderful expression “filled with all the fullness of God.” It pictures our being in God and God in us. One has illustrated it by taking a bottle, holding it in the sea and getting it right full—there is the sea in the bottle! Now, throw it right into the waves and let it sink— and you have the sea in the bottle and the bottle in the sea! So God enters into us and, as we cannot hold more, He makes us come into Himself! Into the very fullness of Christ are we plunged! What more can the amplest imagination conceive, or the hungriest heart desire? Thus God will supply our needs. Well may you fill others, who are yourselves so filled by God! Well may you serve His cause with boundless generosity when the infinite liberality of God is thus ensured to you!

IV. Lastly, let us notice BY WHAT MEANS THE LORD FILLS OUR NEEDS. It is “by Christ Jesus.” Does God supply all His people’s needs by Christ Jesus? Yes, first, by giving them Christ Jesus, for there is everything in Christ Jesus. Christ is all! The man who has Christ has all things, as says the Apostle, “All things are yours, for you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” You will never have a spiritual need which is not supplied in Christ. If you need courage, He can create it. If you need patience, He can teach it. If you need love, He can inspire it! You need washing, and there is the Fountain. You require a garment, and there is the robe of Righteousness. You would have great needs if you went to Heaven without Christ, but you shall not go there without Him! And even there He shall supply you with everything! He it is that prepares your mansion, provides your wedding dress, leads you to His Throne and bids you sit there with Him forever. God will supply your eternal needs by giving you Christ.

Moreover, all things shall come to you by virtue of Christ’s merit. You deserve no good thing, but He deserves it and He says, “Set it to My poor servant’s account.” You may use Christ’s name at the Bank of Heaven freely, for though God might not give His favor to you, He will always give it to His dear, dying, risen, pleading Son! When Jesus’ name is quoted, all things are yielded by the Father. God will give you all things by Christ— therefore do not go to anybody else after those things. If you have begun in the Spirit, do not attempt to be perfected by the flesh. If your only hope is in what Christ has done, stick to that and add nothing to it! Be this your motto—

*“None but Jesus! None but Jesus!”*

Jesus is our All-in-All! We are complete in Him! We need no addenda to the volume of His love. Christ, and Christ, alone, shall supply all your need—all your fresh springs are in Him. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.”

Now, once more, I would to God that some poor soul here that has no faith—that has no good thing about him—would, nevertheless, look over his house and see whether he has not an empty vessel somewhere. All that Christ wants of you, poor Sinner, is that you should be empty and come and let Him fill you with His Grace! Come along with you, just as you are! Bring no good works, no prayers, no anything—but come with all your sins, follies and failures which you may look upon as so many empty pots! Come to Jesus for everything. “But I have scarcely a sense of need,” you say. Come to Him for that, too! You must be very needy to be in need of that. Come and get it from Him. I tell you, Soul, you do not need a halffarthing’s worth of your own—for what you think you have will only keep you from Jesus!

Come in all your poverty—a beggar, a king of beggars! Come and be made rich by Jesus! You that have not a rag to cover your sin with—you that are only fit to be put into the devil’s dust bin and thrown away as worthless—come along with you! My Lord Jesus is ready to receive those that Satan, himself, flings away! If you are such that you cannot find anything in yourself that is desirable and even your old companions, who once cheered you on, now think you too mean for them—yet come into my Master’s company—for, “this Man receives sinners.” Come with your beggary and bankruptcy—you cannot dig, but to beg be not ashamed, for, “My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

As for you that have not trusted my Lord and boast that you can do very well without Him, I suppose I must leave you to fight your own way. You declare that you will carry on your own business and will not be dependent upon God, nor fall into any fanatical ideas, as you are pleased to call them. But we shall see. Already we see that the youths faint and are wearied and the young men utterly fall. We see that the young lions lack and suffer hunger and, also, that the best-laid plans of wisest men go oft awry. And they that have felt assured that they could fight their own way—even they have come to terrible failure. We shall see how you fare. They that mount up with wings as eagles and are proud and vainglorious—even these go down to destruction so that no flesh has reason to glory.

As for me, let me wait upon the Lord God and live by faith in Him. Is it not better to drink of life out of the deep, inexhaustible fullness of God than to go forever pumping and pumping at your own shallow cisterns which hold water? Self-reliance may be well enough, but God-reliance eclipses it as the sun outshines the stars! “Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” There is a God and those who love Him and trust Him and serve Him know that He is a good Master. Job was slandered by the devil when he came and said, “Does Job serve God for nothing?” He insinuated that Job made a good thing out of his religion and was moved by selfish motives.

It was a great lie and yet, in a certain sense, it is true. If anybody says the same of you, admit that it is true. Acknowledge that you do make a fine thing out of your religion. God will not let you serve Him for nothing— you shall never have to ask the question—“What profit is there if we serve God?” You shall have His peace, His love, His joy, His supplies according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus! You shall know that in keeping His Commandments there is great reward! Believer, you shall have everything through Christ and nothing without Him! He that trusts not the Savior and prays not to Him, shall be like Gideon’s fleece—when all around it was wet the fleece was dry! But the man who trusts God and blesses His name shall be like Gideon’s fleece—when all around was dry it was full of moisture!

God will not hear a man’s prayers except through Christ Jesus! But if that name is mentioned, the gates of Heaven fly open! God withholds no real good from the man of God who is in Christ. But our plea must be Jesus, first, and Jesus last, and Jesus in between! We must present the bleeding Lamb before God each morning and each night. I pray you seek no mercy of God apart from Christ, but lay hold upon God in Christ—and you shall have enough for all your need! May God the Holy Spirit cause you to abide in Christ Jesus for His name’s sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—** *2Ki 4:1-7* **and Philippians 4.** HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 84 (SONG II), 23 (FIRST VERSION), 708.

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A NEW YEAR’S WISH  
NO. 3231

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1911. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”***Php 4:19***.**

THE Philippians had several times sent presents to Paul to supply his necessities. Though they were not themselves rich, yet they made a contribution and sent Epaphroditus with it, “an odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” Paul felt very grateful—he thanked God, but he did not forget to also thank the donors—he wished them every blessing and he did as good as say, “You have supplied my need, and my God shall supply yours. You have supplied my need of temporal food and raiment out of your poverty. My God shall supply all your need out of His riches in Glory.” “As,” he says, in the 18th verse, “I have all and abound: I am full.” “So,” he adds, “‘my God shall supply all your need.’ You have sent what you gave me by the hand of a beloved Brother, but God will send a better Messenger to you, for He will supply all your need ‘by Christ Jesus.’” Every single word sounds as if he had thought it over and the Spirit of God had guided him in his meditation so that he should, to the fullest extent, wish them back a blessing similar to that which they had sent to him—only of a richer and more enduring kind!

Now, on this New Year’s Day I would desire, somewhat in the spirit of Paul, to bless those of you who have supplied, according to your abilities, the needs of God’s work in my hands, and have given, even out of your poverty, to the cause of God according as there has been need. I count myself to be personally your debtor though your gifts have been for the students, the orphans, the book and track distributors and not for myself. In return for your kindness, after the manner of His gracious love, “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” This verse is particularly sweet to me, for when we were building the Orphanage, I foresaw that if we had no voting, and no collecting of annual subscriptions, but depended upon the goodness of God and the voluntary offerings of His people, we would have times of trial and, therefore, I ordered the masons to place upon the first columns of the Orphanage entrance, these words, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” The text, therefore, is cut in stone upon the right hand and upon the left of the great archway! There stands this declaration of our confidence in God—and as long as God lives, we shall never need to remove it, for He will certainly supply the needs of His own work! While we serve Him, He will furnish our tables for us!

I. The text might suggest to us a field of gloomy thought if we wished to indulge the melancholy vein, for it speaks of “all your need.” So, first, behold A GREAT NECESSITY—“all your need.” What a gulf! What an abyss! “All your need.” I do not know how many Believers made up the church at Philippi, but the need of one saint is great enough—what must many need? It would not be possible to tell the number of God’s children on earth, but the text comprehends the need of the whole chosen family, “all your need.” We will not ask you to reckon up the wonderful draft upon the Divine bank account which must be made by all the needs of all the saints who are yet on earth—but just think of your own need— that will be more within the compass of your experience and the range of your meditation! May the Lord supply your need and all your need!

There is our temporal need and that is no little matter! If we have food and raiment, we should be content, but there are many of God’s people to whom the mere getting of food and raiment is a wearisome toil—and what with household cares, family trials, sickness of body, losses in business and sometimes the impossibility of obtaining suitable labor, many of God’s saints are as hard up as Elijah was when he sat by the brook Cherith. If God did not send them their bread and meat in a remarkable manner, they would surely starve—but their bread shall be given them and their water shall be sure. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have, perhaps, a large family and your needs are therefore greatly increased. The declaration of the text includes the whole of your needs—personal and relative!

After all, our temporal needs are very small compared with our spiritual needs. A man may, with the blessing of God, pretty readily provide for the needs of the body, but who shall provide for the requirements of the soul? There is need of perpetual pardon, for we are always sinning. And Jesus Christ’s blood is always pleading for us and cleansing us from sin! Every day there is need of fresh strength to battle against inward sin and, blessed be God, it is daily supplied so that our youth is renewed like the eagle’s! As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we need armor from head to foot—and even then we do not know how to wear the armor, or how to wield the sword unless He who gave us these sacred implements shall be always with us. Warring saint, God will supply all your need by His Presence and Spirit. But we are not merely warriors, we are also workers. We are called, many of us, to important spheres of labor, (and, indeed, let no man think his sphere unimportant), but here, also, our hands shall be sufficient for us and we shall accomplish our life-work. You have need to be helped to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right spirit and in the right manner—your need, as a Sunday school teacher, as an open-air preacher and especially as a minister of the Gospel, will be very great, but the text meets all your requirements—“My God shall supply all your need.” Then comes our need in suffering, for many of us are called to take our turn in the Lord’s prison camp. Here we need patience under pain and hope under depression of spirit. Who is sufficient for furnacework? Our God will supply us with those choice Graces and consolations which shall strengthen us to glorify His name even in the fires! He will either make the burden lighter, or the back stronger—He will diminish the need, or increase the supply.

Beloved, it is impossible for me to mention all the forms of our spiritual need. We need to be daily converted from some sin or other, which, perhaps, we have scarcely known to be sin. We need to be instructed in the things of God, we need to be illuminated as to the mind of Christ, we need to be comforted by the promises, we need to be quickened by the precepts, we need to be strengthened by the Doctrines. We need, oh, what do we not need? We are just a bag of needs and a heap of infirmities! If any one of us were to keep a need book, as I have seen tradesmen do, what a huge folio it would need to be! And it might be written inside and out and crossed and re-crossed, for we are full of needs from the first of January to the end of December! But here is the mercy—“My God shall supply all your need.” Are you put in high places? Have you many comforts? Do you enjoy wealth? What need you have to be kept from loving the world, to be preserved from wantonness and pride and the follies and fashions of this present evil world! My God will supply your need in that respect. Are you very poor? Then the temptation is to envy, to bitterness of spirit, to rebellion against God. “My God shall supply all your need.” Are you alone in the world? Then you need the Lord Jesus to be your Companion and your Companion He will be! Have you many around you? Then you have need of Grace to set them a good example, to bring up your children and manage your household in the fear of God. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have need, in times of joy, to be kept sober and steady. You have need, in times of sorrow, to be strong and act like men. You have needs in living and you will have needs in dying—but your last need shall be supplied as surely as your first! “My God shall supply all your need.”

Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, and look down into this great gulf of need and exultingly say, “O Lord, we thank You that our needs are great, for there is then more room for Your love, Your tenderness, Your power, Your faithfulness to fill the chasm!”

That first thought, which I said might be a gloomy one, has all the dreariness taken out of it by four others equally true, but each of them full of good cheer! The text not only mentions a great necessity, but it also mentions a great Helper—“My God.” Next, a great supply— “My God shall supply all your need.” Thirdly, an abundant store out of which to draw the gift—“according to His riches in Glory.” And lastly, a glorious Channel through which the supply shall come—“by Christ Jesus.”

II. So, for our enormous needs here is A GREAT HELPER. “My God shall supply all your need.” Whose God is that? Why, Paul’s God! That is one of the matters in which the greatest saints are no better off than the very least, for though Paul called the Lord, “My God,” He is my God, too! My dear old Friend who sits yonder and has nothing but a few pence in all the world, can also say, “and He is my God, too! He is my God and He is as much my God if I am the meanest, most obscure and weakest of His people, as He would be my God if I were able, like Paul, to evangelize the nations!” It is to me delightful to think that my God is Paul’s God, because, you see, Paul intended this—he meant to say, “You see, dear Brothers and Sisters, my God has supplied all my needs and as He is your God, He will supply yours.” I have been in the Roman dungeon in which Paul is said to have been confined—and a comfortless prison, indeed, it is! First of all you descend into a vaulted chamber into which no light ever comes except through a little round hole in the roof. And then, in the middle of the floor of that den, there is another opening through which the prisoner was let down into a second and lower dungeon in which no fresh air or light could possibly come to him. Paul was probably confined there. The dungeon of the Praetorium in which he was certainly housed is not much better. Paul would have been left well-near to starve there, but for those good people at Philippi! I should not wonder but what Lydia was at the bottom of this kind movement, or else the jailer. They said, “We must not let the good Apostle starve.” And so they made up a contribution and sent him what he needed—and when Paul received it, he said, “My God has taken care of me. I cannot make tents here in this dark place so as to earn my own living, but my Master still supplies my need! And even so, when you are in straits, He will supply yours.”

“ My God.” It has often been sweet to me, when I have thought of my orphan children, and money has not come in, to remember Mr. Müller’s God and how He always supplied the children at Bristol. His God is my God—and I rest upon Him. When you turn over the pages of Scripture and read of men who were in serious trouble and were helped, you may say, “Here is Abraham, he was blessed in all this and Abraham’s God will supply all my need, for He is my God. I read of Elijah, that the ravens fed him. I have Elijah’s God and He can command the ravens to feed me if He pleases. The God of the Prophets, the God of the Apostles, the God of all the saints that have gone before us—“this God is our God forever and ever.” It seems to be thought by some that God will not work, now, as He used to. “Oh, if we had lived in miraculous times,” they say, “then we could have trusted Him! Then there was manifest evidence of God’s existence, for He pushed aside the laws of Nature and worked for the fulfillment of His promises to His people.” Yet that was a rather coarser mode of working than the present one, for now the Lord produces the same results without the violation of the laws of Nature! It is a great fact that without the disturbance of a single law of Nature, prayer becomes effectual with God! And God being enquired of by His people to do it for them, does fulfill His promise and supplies their needs. Using means of various kinds, He still gives His people all things necessary for this life and godliness! Without a miracle, He works great wonders of loving care—and He will continue to do so!

Beloved, is the God of Paul your God? Do you regard Him as such? It is not every man who worships Paul’s God. It is not every professing Christian who really knows the Lord at all, for some invent a deity such as they fancy God ought to be! The God of Paul is the God of the Old and New Testament—such a God as we find there. Do you trust such a God? Can you rest upon Him? “There are such severe judgments mentioned in Scripture.” Yes, do you quarrel with them? Then you cast Him off! But if, instead thereof, you feel, “I cannot understand You, O my God, nor do I think I ever shall, but it is not for me, a child, to measure the Infinite God, or to arraign You at my bar and say to You, ‘Thus should You have done, and thus ought You not to have done.’ You say, ‘Such am I,’ and I answer, ‘Such as You are, I love You and I cast myself upon You, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God of Your servant Paul. You are my God and I will rest upon You.’” Very well, then, He will “supply all your need, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” Just think of that for a minute!

If He will supply you, you will be supplied, indeed, for God is Infinite in capacity! He is Infinitely wise as to the manner of His actions and Infinitely powerful as to the acts themselves! He never sleeps nor tires. He is never absent from any place, but is always ready to help. Your needs come, perhaps, at very unexpected times—they may occur in the midnight of despondency or in the noonday of delight—but God is always near to supply the surprising need! He is everywhere present and everywhere Omnipotent and He can supply all your need, in every place, at every time, to the fullest degree!—

*“Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere”—*and that whenever God wishes to send you aid, He can do it without pausing to ask, “How shall it be done?” He has but to will it and all the

powers of Heaven and earth are subservient to your necessity! With such a Helper, what cause have you to doubt?

III. The next point in the text is, A GREAT SUPPLY. “My God shall supply all your need.” Sometimes we lose a good deal of the meaning of Scripture through the translation. In fact, nothing ever gains by translation except a bishop. The present passage might be rendered thus, “My God will fill to the fullest all your need.” The illustration which will best explain the meaning is that of the woman whose children were to be sold by her creditor to pay the debts of her late husband. She had nothing to call her own except some empty jars—and the Prophet bade her set these in order and bring the little oil which still remained in the cruse. She did so and he then said to her, “Go among your neighbors and borrow empty vessels, not a few.” She went from one to another till she had filled her room full of these empty vessels—and then the Prophet said, “Pour out.” She began to pour out from her almost empty cruse and, to her surprise, it filled her largest jar! She went to another and filled that, and then another and another! She kept on filling all the jars till, at last she said to the Prophet, “there is not a vessel more.” Then the oil stopped, but not till then! So will it be with your needs. You were frightened at having so many needs just now, were you not? But now be pleased to think you have them, for they are just so many empty vessels to be filled! If the woman had borrowed only a few jars, she could not have received much oil—but the more empty vessels she had—the more oil she obtained! So the more wants and the more needs you have—if you bring them to God, so much the better—for He will fill them all to the brim and you may be thankful that there are so many to be filled! When you have no more needs, (but oh, when will that be), then the supply will stop, but not till then!

How gloriously God gives to His people! We needed pardon once—He washed us and He made us whiter than snow! We needed clothing, for we were naked. What did He do? Give us some rough dress or other? Oh, no! But He said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” It was a fortunate thing for the prodigal that his clothes were all in rags, for then he needed raiment and the best robe was brought forth! It is a grand thing to be sensible of spiritual needs, for they will all be supplied. A conscious need in the sight of God—what is it but a prevalent request for a new mercy? We have sometimes asked Him to comfort us, for we were very low. But when the Lord has comforted us, He has so filled us with delight that we have been inclined to cry with the old Scotch Divine, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough! I cannot bear more joy. Remember I am only an earthen vessel.” We, in relieving the poor, generally give no more than we can help, but our God does not stop to count His favors—He gives like a king! He pours water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground!

IV. We must pass on to the next thought and consider for a minute or two THE GREAT RESOURCES out of which this supply is to come. “My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in Glory.” The preacher may sit down, now, for He cannot compass this part of the text. God’s riches in Glory are beyond all thought!

Consider the riches of God in Nature—who shall count His treasures? Get away into the forests—travel on mile after mile among the trees which cast their ample shade for no man’s pleasure, but only for the Lord. Mark on lone mountainside and far-reaching plain the myriads of flowers whose perfume is for God alone. What wealth each spring and summer is created in the boundless estates of the great King! Observe the vast amount of animal and insect life which crowds the land with the riches of Divine Wisdom, for “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” Look towards the sea—think of those shoals of fish, so countless that when only the fringe of them is touched by our fishermen, they find enough food to supply a nation! Mark, too, the sunken treasures of the ocean which no hand gathers but that of the Eternal. If you would see the wealth of the Creator, cast your eyes to the stars—count their numbers if you can! Astronomy has enlarged our vision and made us look upon this world as a mere speck compared with innumerable other worlds that God has made and it tells us that probably all the myriads of worlds that we can see with the telescope are a mere fraction of the countless orbs which are in infinite space! Vast are God’s riches in Nature. It needs a Milton to sing, as he sang in Paradise Lost, the riches of the creating God!

The riches of God in Providence are equally without bound. He says to this creature, “Go,” and he goes, and to another, “Do this,” and he does it, for all things do His bidding. Think of the wealth of God in Grace. There Nature and Providence stand eclipsed, for we have the Fountain of Eternal Love, the gift of an Infinite Sacrifice, the pouring out of the blood of His own dear Son and the Covenant of Grace in which the smallest blessing is infinite in value! The riches of His Grace! “God is rich in mercy”—rich in patience, love, power, kindness—rich beyond all conception!

Now your needs shall be supplied according to the riches of Nature, the riches of Providence and the riches of Grace! But this is not all—the Apostle chooses a higher style and writes “according to His riches in Glory.” Ah, we have never seen God in Glory! That were a sight our eyes could none at present behold! Christ in His Glory, when transfigured upon earth, was too resplendent a spectacle even for the tutored eyes of Peter, James, and John—

*“At the too-transporting light”—*  
darkness rushed upon them and they were as men that slept! What God is in His Glory do you know, you angels? Does He not veil His face even from you lest, in the excessive brightness of His Essence, even you should be consumed? Who among all His creatures can tell the riches of His Glory when even the heavens are not pure in His sight and He charges His angels with folly?

“His riches in Glory.” It means not only the riches of what He has done, but the riches of what He could do, for if He has made hosts of worlds, He could make as many myriads more—and then have but begun! The possibilities of Omnipotent God, who shall reckon? But the Lord shall supply all your need according to such glorious possibilities. When a great king gives according to his, riches, then he does not measure out stinted alms to beggars, but he gives like a king, as we say. And if it is some grand festival day, and the king is in his state array, his largesse is on a noble scale. Now, when God is in His Glory, think, if you can, what must be the largesse that He distributes—what the treasures that He brings forth for His own beloved! Now, “according to His riches in Glory,” He will supply all your needs. After that, dare you despond? O Soul, what insanity is unbelief? What flagrant blasphemy is doubt of the love of God! He must bless us; and, blessed by Him, we must be blest, indeed! If He is to supply our needs “according to His riches in Glory”— they will be supplied to the fullest!

V. Now let us close our meditation by considering THE GLORIOUS CHANNEL by which these needs are to be supplied—“According to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” You shall have all your soul’s needs satisfied, but you must go to Christ for everything. “By Christ Jesus.” That is the Fountainhead where the Living Waters well up! You will not supply your needs by your own care and fretfulness. “Consider the lilies, how they grow.” You are to be enriched “by Christ Jesus.” You will not have your spiritual needs supplied by going to Moses and working and toiling as if you were your own savior, but by faith in Christ Jesus! Those who will not go to Christ Jesus must go without Divine Grace, for God will give them nothing in the way of Grace except through His Son! Those who go to Jesus the most, shall taste of His abundance more often, for through Him all blessings come! My advice to myself and to you is that we abide in Him for since that is the way by which the blessing comes, we had better abide in it! We read of Ishmael that he was sent into the wilderness with a bottle, but Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-Roi. And it is wise for us to dwell by the Well, Christ Jesus, and never trust to the bottles of our own strength. If you wander from Christ Jesus, Brothers and Sisters, you depart from the center of bliss!

All this year I pray that you may abide by the well of this text. Draw from it. Are you very thirsty? Draw from it, for it is full! And when you plead this promise, the Lord will supply all your need! Do not cease receiving from God for a minute. Let not your unbelief hinder the Lord’s bounty, but cling to this promise, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” I know not how to wish you a greater blessing. If you are enabled by the Holy Spirit to realize it, you will enjoy what I earnestly wish for you, namely— A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *2Ki 4:1-7***; Philippians 4.**

**2Ki 4:1**. Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Your servant, my husband, is dead and you know that your servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. It is sad for anyone to be in debt and yet there may be circumstances under which even a man who fears the Lord may die in debt and leave no provision for his wife and children except a large portion of sorrow. In the case of this poor widow, it was not long before she cried to Elisha, “The creditor is come.” He generally does come pretty quickly and he had come to her to take away her two sons whom she needed to support her—to make them bondmen—slaves, to serve him for a certain number of years till their father’s debt was worked out. And this hurt the poor woman’s heart, so she came to see what the Lord’s servant could do for her. She could not bear to see her sons taken away to serve as bondmen to a stranger through no fault of their own and, possibly, through no fault on their father’s part.

2. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for you? Elisha was probably about as poor as she was, so what could he do for her?  
2. Tell me, what have you in the house? “Whatever there is in the house must go towards this debt, so ‘tell me what have you in the house?’”  
2. And she said, Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil. Her husband had been a God-fearing man, a true servant of Jehovah, yet he had died in such dire poverty that his widow had to say to Elisha, “Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.” Those were indeed bad times for the sons of the Prophets for, in those days men cared more for false prophets and for the priests of Baal than for the servants of the Most High God!  
3. Then he said, Go, borrow vessels abroad of all your neighbors, even

empty vessels; borrow not a few. [See Sermon #2063, Volume 35—THE FILLING OF EMPTY VESSELS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “Get as many empty oil jars as you can, it does not matter how great nor how many they are, but they must be empty.” 4-6. And when you are come in, you shall shut the door upon you and upon your sons, and shall pour out into all those vessels, and you shall set aside that which is full. So she went from him and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her

son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not another ves  
sel. And the oil stopped. [See Sermon #1467-A, Volume 25—THE OIL AND THE VESSELS— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There was  
no reason why “the oil stopped” except that there was “not another vessel” to receive the flowing stream!

7. Then she came and told the man of God. She must have understood that the oil was to be used for the payment of her debt, but she was a woman of delicate sensitiveness, with a tender conscience—as honest people usually are—so she wanted full permission from Elisha before she would dispose of the oil. She regarded it, in some sense, as his oil—as it was through using the means that he had directed that her little store of oil had been so miraculously multiplied. So “she came and told the man of God.”

7. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt, and live, you and the children off the rest. What a merciful deliverance that was for the poor widow and her sons! And there have been many other deliverances in the experiences of God’s people which, if they have not been quite as miraculous as this one, have, nevertheless, been very remarkable—although God has appeared to work them the common way in which He is constantly working. Yet they have been uncommon mercies all the while.

Now let us read Paul’s letter to the Christians at Philippi who had been the means of supplying his necessities, though not in the miraculous manner in which the Prophet Elisha had supplied the needs of that poor widow.

**Php 4:1**. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the lord, my dearly beloved. [See Sermon  
#1959, Volume 33—THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY—STAND FAST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Paul had a very warm affection

for the Church at Philippi. You remember how that Church was established—first with the baptized household of Lydia and afterwards with the baptized household of the jailer. These saints at Philippi were, in a special sense, Paul’s spiritual children. They were very generous and kind to him, and his heart was very warm with love to them, so he called them, “my brethren dearly beloved,” and then again, “my dearly beloved.”

2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. These two women had fallen out with one another. They evidently differed upon some question or other so that they were not “of the same mind in the Lord,” and Paul thought it so important that there should be perfect unity and love in the Church at Philippi, as well as everywhere else, that he beseeched these two women, of whom we know nothing else, that they would be “of the same mind in the Lord.” Notice that he beseeches each of them in exactly the same way—“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.” He has a, “beseech,” for each of them! Perhaps, if he had written, “I beseech Euodias and Syntyche,” the latter lady might have fancied that he was not quite so earnest about her as he was about Euodias, so he puts it, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Have any of you fallen out, my dear Friends? I do not know of any of you who have done so, but if you have, I say to all of you, men or women, “I beseech you, that you be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is nothing like perfect unity in a Christian Church! If there is even a little division, it will grow to something much worse, by-and-by, so I beseech you, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3. And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow—Their minister—  
3. Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life. They helped me, and they have helped you, so help them with encouraging words and in every other way that you can.  
4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Not only now and then, on high days and holiday, have a time of joy, but, “rejoice in the Lord always.”

4. And again I say, Rejoice. [See Sermon #2405, Volume 41—JOY, A DUTY— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He had said

this before, as you will see in the first verse of the third Chapter, which begins, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Now he writes it again and repeats it in the same verse—“Rejoice. Rejoice.” It is so important that Believers should be full of joy that Paul writes three times over in a short space, “Rejoice in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Be men who are Godgoverned, because God governs those who run to excess in nothing. Some go to excess in one way and some in another, but all excess is to be avoided! “Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

5, 6. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing. This is not a good translation of the original—it does not convey the sense of the Greek. It should to, “Be anxious for nothing.” Of course you ought to be careful about everything. You cannot be too careful, but you never ought to be care-full, you must care to be right with God, yet you must not be filled with care about anything. “Be anxious for nothing.” Do not fret, do not worry, do not make other people miserable by your fretting and fuming and fueling.

6. But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. [See Sermon #2351, Volume 40—PRAYER,  
THE CURE FOR CARE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Ah, this is the way to find the cure for all your anxieties! Take all your trouble to God with a prayer and with a song. Do not go without either the thanksgiving or the prayer, but bear your burden at once to God and ask Him to bear it for you.

7, 8. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things. If anything is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report—be on that side. A Christian is on the side of everything that makes for purity, chastity, honesty or that is for the good of men and the Glory of God! Whenever anyone is making out a list of those who will fight for everything that is right and good, every Christian should say to the man writing the list, “Set down my name, Sir.”

9, 10. Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of Peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity. You see that Paul did not really mean, “Be careful for nothing,” for he says here that these Philippians had cared for him and he praises them for being careful of him. They had lovingly thought of him who was their spiritual father—and when they knew that he was shut up as a prisoner in Rome, and suffering need, they took care to send something to relieve and cheer him.

11. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. [See Sermon #320, Volume 6—CONTENTMENT—  
Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I have been  
initiated—for that is the word—“among those who are content with such things as they have.”

12, 13. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which

strengthens me. [See Sermons #345 and #346, Volume 6—SELF-SUFFICIENCY SLAIN and ALLSUFFICIENCY MAGNIFIED—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “I can be poor, or I can have abundance, if you send it to me, but these things make no real difference to me. I have been made invulnerable either to suffering or to abundance.” Blessed is the man who has got as far as that! It is a wonderful work of Divine Grace when a man can truly say this!

14, 15. Nevertheless you have done well, that you shared with my affliction. Now you Philippians also know that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. I should not wonder if it was Lydia who was at the bottom of that giving and receiving and, perhaps, the jailer. They were evidently thoughtful and grateful people. They remembered the Apostle’s sufferings and needs and did all they could to help and cheer him.

16, 17. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. He did not look at it as merely something that would ease him, but he looked at it as a token of gratitude for the spiritual blessings they had received through him! It showed that they loved the Gospel which he preached and that they also loved him for having been blessed by God to their souls—and this cheered and delighted him. But, to show that he was not asking for more, he says—

18. But I have all, and abound: I am full. I do not suppose that it amounted to much, but it was all that the Apostle needed—and so he says to them, “I have all, and abound: I am full.”

18, 19. Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. I am sure that when they read this verse, they all felt glad that they had had a share in the subscription to relieve the Apostle’s needs.

20, 21. Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. “Give them all my love and tell them how grateful I am to them.”

21, 22. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. Exposed to the greatest perils and yet brave to confess Christ! They may have been nothing but poor kitchen maids, or they may have been among the Praetorian guards who watched and guarded the palace and the prisoners, but they must have their title set down in the letter, “chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.”

23. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

÷Col 1.5

THE HOPE LAID UP IN HEAVEN  
NO. 1438

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 13, 1878, BY C.H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.”***Col 1:5***.**

THREE Divine Graces should be always conspicuous in Christians— faith, love and hope. They are each mentioned by Paul in the opening verses of the Epistle from which our text is taken. These lovely Graces should be so conspicuous in every Believer as to be spoken of and, consequently, heard of even by those who have never seen us. These flowers should yield so sweet a perfume that their fragrance may be perceived by those who have never gazed upon them. So was it with the saints at Colosse. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.”

May our characters be such as can be reported of without causing us to blush—but that can never be the case if these essential virtues are absent. If these things are in us and abound, we shall not be barren or unfruitful. But if they are lacking, we are as withered branches. We should, therefore, be rich in faith, which is the root of every Grace and, to this end, we should daily pray, “Lord, increase our faith.” We should strive to be full even to overflowing with love, which is of God and makes us like unto God. And we should also abound in hope, even that heavenly hope which causes a man to purify himself in readiness for the inheritance above. See to it that neither of these three Divine Sisters are strangers to your souls, but let Faith, Hope and Love take up their abode in your hearts!

Note, however, the special character of each of these Graces as it exists in the Christian. It is not every faith and love and hope that will serve our turn, for of all precious things there are counterfeits! There is a kind of faith in all men, but ours is faith in Christ Jesus, faith in Him whom the world rejects, whose Cross is a stumbling block and whose doctrine is an offense. We have faith in the Man of Nazareth who is also the Son of God. We have faith in Him who, having made atonement by His own blood once and for all, is now exalted at His Father’s right hand. Our confidence is not placed in ourselves, nor in any human priest nor in the traditions of our fathers, nor in the teachings of human wisdom, but ONLY in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of God’s elect.

The love of Christians, too, is also special, for while a Christian man is moved by universal benevolence and desires to do good unto all men, yet he has a special love unto all the saints and these the world loves not because it loves not their Lord. The true Believer loves the persecuted, the

misrepresented and despised people of God for Christ’s sake. He loves them all, even though he may think some of them to be mistaken in minor matters. He has love to the babies in Grace as well as to the grown saints—and love even to those saints whose infirmities are more manifest than their virtues! He loves them not for their station, or for their natural amiability, but because Jesus loves them and because they love Jesus. You see the faith is in Christ Jesus, but the love extends beyond Christ, Himself, to all those who are in union with Him.

Hope takes a still wider sweep and includes the eternal future in its circuit. Thus do our Graces increase in range as well as in number. Our hope, too, upon which we are to speak this morning, is special, because it is a hope which is laid up for us in Heaven. It is a hope, therefore, which the worldling cares not one whit about! He hopes that tomorrow may be as this day and yet more abundant, but he cares nothing for the land where time has ceased to flow. He hopes for riches or he hopes for fame— he hopes for long life and prosperity—he hopes for pleasure and domestic peace. The whole range of his hope is within the compass of his eyes!

But our hope has passed beyond the sphere of sight, according to the word of the Apostle, “What a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we, with patience, wait for it.” Ours is a hope which demands nothing of time or earth, but seeks its all in the world to come! It is of this hope that we are about to speak. May the Holy Spirit lead us into a profitable meditation upon it. The connection of our text seems to be this—the Apostle so much rejoiced when he saw the saints at Colosse possessing faith, love and hope, that he thanked God and prayed about them. He saw these seals of God upon them—these three tokens that they were a really converted people—and his heart was glad!

All the faithful ministers of Christ rejoice to see their people adorned with the jewels of faith, love and hope, for these are their ornaments for the present and their preparation for the future. This I believe to be the connection, but yet from the form of the language it is clear that the Apostle intended to state that their love to the saints was very much produced in them by the hope which was laid up in Heaven. You notice the word, “for,” which stands there—“The love which you have to all the saints for,” or on account of, or because of, “the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.” There can be no doubt that the hope of Heaven tends greatly to foster love to all the saints of God! We have a common hope—let us have a common affection! We are on our way to God—let us march in loving company! We are to be one in Heaven—let us be one on earth! One is our Master, one is our service, one is our way and one is our end—let us be knit together as one man!

We all expect to see our Well-Beloved face to face and to be like He. Why should we not, even now, love all those in whom there is anything of Christ? Brethren, we are to live together forever in Heaven—it is a pity we should quarrel! We are forever to be with Jesus Christ, partakers of the same joy, of the same glory and of the same love—why should we be scant in our love to each other? On the way to Canaan we have to fight the same enemy, to publish the same testimony, to bear the same trials, and to fly to the same Helper—therefore let us love one another! It were not difficult to show that the hope which is laid up in Heaven should be productive of love among the saints on earth.

This connection of my text with the clause immediately before it does not at all prevent its being regarded in the sense which I first mentioned, namely, that it was a subject for joy with the Apostle that the Colossians had faith, love and hope, for he would rejoice, none the less, because their faith was fostered by their hope. It commends these sweet Graces, that they are so wonderfully intertwisted with each other and dependent upon one another. There would be no love to the saints if there were not faith in Christ Jesus! And if there were not faith in Christ Jesus there would be no hope laid up in Heaven! If we had no love, it would be certain that we had no true faith. And if we had no hope, faith would be assuredly absent.

If we entertain one of the Graces we must receive her sisters, for they cannot be separated. Here are three brilliants set in the same golden setting and none must break the precious jewel. “Now abides faith, hope and love, these three,” and blessed is he who has them abiding in his own heart! Now we will let faith and love stand by for a little while and we will talk about hope, the hope mentioned in our text; the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven. First, it is a very marvelous hope. Secondly, it is a very secure hope. And thirdly, it is a very powerfully influential hope. May the Holy Spirit bless these three thoughts to us all.

I. First, then, we speak of our hope which is laid up for us in Heaven as A VERY MARVELOUS HOPE and it is so if we only consider that it is a great act of Grace that sinners should have a hope at all! That when man had broken his Maker’s Law there should remain a hope for him is a thought which should make our hearts leap with gratitude! Do you not recollect when you felt it to be so? When sin lay heavily upon your conscience, Satan came and wrote over the lintel of your door, “NO HOPE,” and the grim sentence would have stood there to this day had not a loving hand taken the hyssop and, by a sprinkling of precious blood, removed the black inscription. “Remember that at that time you were without Christ, having no hope and without God in the world.”

That was our condition once and it is a marvelous thing that it should be thoroughly changed and that assurance should have taken the place of despair! In our carnal estate many false hopes, like will-o’-the-wisps, danced before us, deceived us and led us into bogs of presumption and error—we had no hope. This is a dreadful condition for a man to be in! It is, indeed, the very worst of all. Never is the storm so terrible as when in the howling of the winds the man distinctly hears the words, “No hope.” Yet into the thick darkness of NO HOPE we once steered our course and each time we tried to rely upon good works, outward ceremonies and good resolutions, we were disappointed anew and the words rung into our souls with dread monotony, “No hope, no hope,” until we wished we could lie down and die!

Now, though we are sinners, we have a hope! Ever since by faith we looked to Jesus on the Cross, a hope full of glory has taken possession of our hearts! Is not this a marvelous thing? More marvelous still, is it that our hope should venture to be associated with Heaven! Can there be Heaven for such as we are? It seems almost presumptuous for a sinner who so richly deserves Hell even to lift up his eyes towards Heaven. He might have some hope of “purgatory” if there were such a region, but a hope of Heaven—is not that too much? Yet, Brothers and Sisters, we have no fear of Hell or of “purgatory” now—we expect to taste the joys laid up in Heaven! There is no “purgatory” for anyone and there is no Hell for saints—Heaven awaits all believers in Jesus. Our hope is full of glory, for it has to do with the Glory of Christ, whom we hope to behold. Do you expect then, you who were black with lust, that you shall sit among the angels? “Yes, that we do,” says the Believer, “and nearer to the Throne than they!”

And you who have plunged into every form of uncleanness, do you expect to see God, for none but the pure in heart can behold Him? “Yes, that we do,” say they, “and not only to see Him, but to be like His Son, when we see Him as He is.” What a Divine hope is this! Not that we shall sit down on Heaven’s doorsteps and hear stray notes of the songs within, but that we shall sing with the happy choir! Not that we shall have an occasional glance within the gates of pearl and feel our hearts hankering after the unutterable joys within the sacred enclosure, but we shall actually and personally enter into the halls of the palace and see the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off! This is a brave hope, is it not? Why, she aspires to all that the best of saints have received! She looks for the same vision of Glory, the same ecstasy of delight—she even aspires to sit upon the Throne of Christ, according to the promise, “To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on my Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on His Throne.”

Hope reckons to be among the overcomers and to partake in their enthronement! This is marvelous hope for a struggling Believer to entertain! Yet it is not presumption, but confidence warranted by the Word of God! Is it not a miracle of love that such poor creatures as ourselves should be enabled thus to hope in God? This hope is the more marvelous because it is so substantial. In our text the Apostle scarcely seems to be speaking of the Grace of hope, since that can hardly be said to be laid up in Heaven, but dwells in our bosoms. He rather speaks of the objective of hope and yet it is clear that in his mind the Grace of hope as well as the objective must have been intended, because that which is laid up in Heaven is not a hope except to those who hope for it! It is clear that no man has a hope laid up in Heaven unless he has hope within himself.

The truth is that the two things—the Grace of hope and its objective— are here mentioned under one term, which may be intended to teach us that when hope is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit, it is the thing hoped for, even as faith is the thing believed, because it realizes and secures it. Just as faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, so is hope the substance of the thing it expects and the evidence of the thing it cannot see. Paul, in this case, as in many others, uses language rather according to the theological sense which he would convey than according to the classical usage of the Greek tongue. The words of a heathen people must be somewhat strained from their former use if they are to express Divine Truth and Paul does thus stretch them to their utmost length in this case.

The hope of the true Believer is so substantial that Paul even speaks of it as though it were the thing itself and were laid up in Heaven! Many a man has a hope of wealth, but that hope is a different thing from being wealthy. There is many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip, says the old proverb, and how true it is! A man may have a hope of old age, yet he may never reach even middle life, and thus it is clear that the hope of long life is not, in itself, longevity. But he that has the Divine hope which grows out of faith and love has a hope which shall never be disappointed, so that the Apostle speaks of it as being identical with the thing hoped for and describes it as laid up in Heaven! What a marvelous hope is this which long before its realization is treated as a matter of actual attainment and spoken of as a treasure reserved in the coffers of Heaven!

One marvelous point about our hope is this—it is the subject of Divine Revelation. No one could ever have invented this hope—it is so glorious as to baffle imagination! The prince of dreamers could never have dreamed it, nor the master of the art of logic have inferred it by reason. Imagination and understanding are both left on the ground, while the Bible idea of Heaven soars upward like a strong-winged angel. The eternal hope had to be revealed to us—we should never have known it, otherwise, for the Apostle says, “Of which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” That a sinful man should have a hope of enjoying the perfect bliss of Paradise is a thing not to be thought of, were it not that the Lord has promised it!

I say again, imagination’s utmost stretch could never had reached to this and neither could we have had the presumption to suppose that such a bliss could be in store for men so unworthy and undeserving had we not been assured thereof by the Word of God! But now the Word of God has opened a window in Heaven and bid us look therein and hope for the time when we shall drink of its living fountains of waters and go no more out forever. This is marvelous and it is even more marvelous to think that this hope came to us simply by hearing. “Of which you heard before in the Word of the truth of the Gospel.” “Faith comes by hearing” and hope comes by faith—and so the Divine hope of being in Heaven came to us by hearing—not by working, not by deserving, not by penance and sacrifice, but simply by listening diligently unto the Divine Word and believing unto life!

We heard that the pierced hands of Jesus had opened the kingdom of Heaven to all Believers and we believed and saw a way of entrance into the holiest by His blood! We heard that God had prepared, for them that love Him, joys indescribable and we believed the message, trusting in His Son. Our confidence is in the Word which we have heard, for it is written, “Hear and your soul shall live.” And we find that by hearing, our confidence is strengthened and our heart filled with inward assurance and joyful expectation—therefore do we love the Word of God more and more! Will we not prize to the uttermost that sacred Word which has brought us such a hope? Yes, that we will—till we exchange hearing for seeing—and the message of Jesus for Jesus, Himself! We will always lend a willing ear to the testimony of Jesus!

This hope is marvelous, once more, because the substance of it is most extraordinary. Brothers and Sisters, what is the hope which is laid up for us in Heaven? It would need many a sermon to bring out all the phases of delight which belong to that hope! It is the hope of victory, for we shall overcome every foe and Satan shall be trod under our feet. A palm of victory is prepared for our hands and a crown for our heads. Our life struggle shall not end in defeat, but in complete and eternal triumph, for we shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb! Nor do we hope for only victory—but in our own persons we shall possess perfection. We shall one day cast off the slough of sin and shall be seen in the beauty of our newborn life. Truly, “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” but when we think of the matchless Character of our Lord Jesus, we are overjoyed by the assurance that “we shall be like He.”

What an honor and a bliss for the younger Brethren to be like the Firstborn! To what higher honor could God Himself exalt us? I know not of anything which could surpass this! Oh, matchless joy to be as holy, harmless and undefiled as our own beloved Lord! How delightful to have no propensity to sin remaining in us nor trace of its ever having been there! How blissful to perceive that our holy desires and aspirations have no weakness or defect remaining in them! Our nature will be perfect and fully developed in all its sinless excellence! We shall love God as we do now, but oh how much more intensely! We shall rejoice in God as we do now, but oh what depth there will be in that joy! We shall delight to serve Him as we do now, but there will, then, be no coldness of heart, no languor of spirit, no temptation to turn aside.

Our service will be as perfect as that of angels! Then shall we say to ourselves without fear of any inward failure, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.” There will be no recreant affection then! No erring judgment, no straying passion, no rebellious lust! There will remain nothing which can defile, or weaken, or distract! We shall be perfect, altogether perfect. This is our hope—victory over evil and perfection in all that is good! If this were all our hope it would be marvelous, but there is more to be unfolded. We expect to enjoy security, also, from every danger. As there will be no evil in us, so there will be none around us or about us to cause us alarm. No temporal evil such as pain, bereavement, sorrow, labor, or reproach shall come near us!

All will be security, peace, rest, and enjoyment. No mental evil will intrude upon us in Heaven. No doubts, no staggering difficulties, no fears, no bewilderments will cause us distress. Here we see through a glass darkly and we know in part—but there we shall see face to face and know even as we are known! Oh, to be free from mental trouble! What a relief will this be to many a doubting Thomas! This is a marvelous hope! And then no spiritual enemy will assail us. No world, no flesh, no devil will mar our rest above. What will you make out of it, you tried ones? Your Sabbaths are very sweet now on earth, but when they are over, you have to return to yon cold world again. But there your Sabbath shall never end and your separation from the wicked will be complete!

It will be a strange sensation for you to find no Monday morning, no care to be renewed, no toil to be encountered, no harness to be buckled on afresh! But above all, no sin to be dreaded, no temptation to be escaped! Heaven is so peaceful that the storms of earth are unknown there. The stirrings of the flesh are never felt and the howls of the dogs of Hell are never heard. All is peace and purity there—perfection and security forever! With this security will come perfect rest—“Yes, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.” Heavenly rest is quite consistent with continual service, for, like the angels, we shall rest on the wing and find it rest to serve God day and night. But there you shall not toil till the sweat dampens your face, neither shall the sun burn you, nor any heat! No weary limb nor fevered brain shall follow upon the blessed service of Heaven.

Heaven is a paradise of pleasure and a palace of glory! It is a garden of supreme delights and a mansion of abiding love! It is an everlasting Sabbatismos, a rest which never can be broken, which evermore remains for the people of God! It is a kingdom where all are kings, an inheritance where all are heirs! My soul pants for it! Is not this a charming hope? Did I not say well when I declared it to be marvelous? Nor is this all, Brothers and Sisters, for we expect to enjoy in Heaven a happiness beyond compare! Eye has not seen it, nor ear heard it, nor has the heart conceived it—it surpasses all carnal joy! We know a little of it, for the Lord has revealed it unto us by the Spirit, who searches all things, even the deep things of God. Yet what we know is but a mere taste of the marriage feast—enough to make us long for more, but by no means sufficient to give us a complete idea of the whole banquet!

If it is so sweet to preach about Christ, what must it be to see Him and be with Him? If it is so delightful to be ravished by the music of His name, what must it be to lie in His bosom? Why, if these few clusters of Eshcol which are, now and then, brought to us are so sweet, what will it be to abide in the vineyard where all the clusters grow? If that one bucketful from the well of Bethlehem tasted so sweetly that we scarcely dared to drink it, but poured it out before the Lord as a thank-offering, what a joy will it be to drink at the wellhead without stint forever! O to be eternally at the right hand of God where there are pleasures forevermore! This is our hope and yet there is more, for we have the hope of everlasting fellowship with Christ! I would give 10,000 worlds, if I had them, to have one glimpse of that dear face which was marred with sorrow for my sake!

But to sit at my Lord’s feet and look up into His countenance and hear His voice, and never, never grieve Him, but to participate in all His triumphs and glories forever and forever—what a Heaven will this be! Then shall we have fellowship with all His saints in whom He is glorified and by whom His image is reflected. And thus shall we behold fresh displays of

His power and beams of His love. Is not this surpassing bliss? Said I not well when I declared that ours is a marvelous hope? Had I eloquence and could pile on good words—and could a poet assist me with his sweetest song—to tell of the bliss and joy of the eternal world, yet must preacher and poet both confess their inability to describe the Glory to be revealed in us! The noblest intellect and the sweetest speech could not convey to you so much as a thousandth part of the bliss of Heaven!

There I leave the first head. It is a very marvelous hope!  
II. Secondly, let us remark that IT IS A MOST SECURE HOPE. It is so according to the text, because it is laid up or secured. The recent calamities which have occurred in connection with the Glasgow City Bank will make businessmen very careful where they lay up their treasures, but no one can entertain any fear of the safety of that which God Himself takes under His charge! If your hope is laid up with Him it becomes sinful to doubt its security. It is “laid up,” the text says, and this means that it is hidden in a safe place like a treasure which is well secured.  
We find it hard to lay up our valuables safely in this world because thieves break through and steal. The iron safe, the strong room and all sorts of inventions are employed to preserve them from felonious grips, but when God becomes the Guardian of our treasure, He lays it up where none can touch it and neither man nor devil can steal it. Our hope is laid up just as crowns and wreaths were laid up at the Grecian games for those who won them—no one could snatch them away from their rightful owners. The rewards were safely retained for the winners, to be distributed when the contest was over. You see not as yet your hope, Beloved, but it is laid up—it is hidden with Christ in God and made as safe as the Throne of God Himself.  
Notice the next word, it is laid up, “for you.” It is something to have your hope laid up, but it is much better to have it laid up for yourself. “Laid up for you.” That is, for you whose faith is in Christ Jesus and who have love to all the saints. There is a crown in Heaven which will never be worn by any head but yours! There is a harp in Glory that will never be touched by any fingers but yours. Make no mistake about it, it is laid up for you in Heaven! It is “reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” “For you”— “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Lay the stress there and get honey out of it. “Laid up for you.”  
Where is it laid up? The next word tells us. “Laid up for you in Heaven,” “where,” says the Savior as though He were expounding the text, “neither moth nor rust does corrupt.” This means that no process of decay will cause your treasure to become stale and worn out! No secret moth will eat the garments of Heaven’s courtiers and no rust will tarnish the brightness of their crowns. Our Lord adds, “Nor do thieves break through nor steal.” We cannot imagine a burglar’s breaking through the walls of Heaven! We could not imagine Satan himself undermining the bastions of the New Jerusalem, or leaping over the bulwarks which guard the city of the Great King! If your hope is laid up in Heaven it must be perfectly safe.  
If your hope lies in the bank, it may break—if it lies in an empire, it may melt away. If it lies in an estate, the title-deeds may be questioned; if it lies in any human creature, death may bereave you. If it lies in yourself, it is altogether deceitful! But if your hope is laid up in Heaven, how secure it is! Be glad and bless the Lord. To show how secure is our hope, the Apostle tells us that we have an indisputable certificate and guarantee for it. He says, “We heard of it in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” Notice these three emphatic words—“In the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” First, “In the Word.” What word is that? Man’s word? Man’s words are so much wind! But this is God’s Word, the same Word that made Heaven and earth! A Word of power which cannot fail and of Truth which cannot lie.  
You first hear of this blessed hope through the Word of God and that Word is the best of evidence. You know how a person will say, “My word for it”?—Here you have God’s Word for it! We take a good man’s word freely and will we not take God’s Word much more readily? You have the Word of God for the sure hope that believers in Christ Jesus shall be blessed forever—is not this security enough? Our text goes on to say, “the Word of the Truth.” So, then, it is not a word of guess, conjecture, or of probable inference, but of Infallible Truth! My Brothers of the modern school, my wise Brothers, have a word of excogitation, outcome and development—but the word the Apostle preached was “the Word of the Truth”—something positive, dogmatic and certain!  
Ugly as the word may sound, the Lord grant that we may never be ashamed of the thing called dogmatism, nowadays, which is none other than faith in God’s Truth! We believe the Word of God not only to be true, but to be “the Word of the Truth.” “Let God be true and every man a liar.” There may be other true things in the world, but God’s Word is the essence of Truth, the Truth beyond all things else that may be true, for He has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall never pass away.” The Apostle says in another place, “All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away; but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.”  
Note the next word, “The Word of the Truth of the Gospel,” or of the Good News. That is to say, the sum and substance of the Good News is to be found in this glorious hope! If you extract the essence of the Gospel and get the Truth of God, which is the central germ of the glad tidings, you come at that blessed hope most sure and steadfast which enters into that within the veil. Now, then, before your God-created hope can fail, the Word of God will have to be broken! But the Word of God cannot be broken! The Truth of God will have to fail, but the Truth of God abides forever and is by force of its own Nature eternal! And the Gospel will have to be disproved, but that cannot be, since the Glory of God is made to hang upon it!  
You have heard it, then, “in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel.” What better assurance do you need? Hold to it and rejoice in it and you shall never be ashamed of your hope!  
III. I close by saying that IT IS A MOST POWERFULLY INFLUENTIAL HOPE. Brothers and Sisters, I have already said to you that this hope is the parent and nurse of love because the text says, “The love which you have to all the saints for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven.” Now, that is no trifling fountain of action which leads believing hearts to love, since love is always a working Grace! Oh, for more love in this distracted world! Whatever in this world promotes Christian love is to be admired and, since the hope that we shall be forever together before the Throne of God lifts us above the little disagreements of society and makes us affectionate to each other, it is a thing to cultivate with care.  
Love is one part of the powerful operation of hope upon ourselves, but hopefulness affects others, also. Where the hopefulness of saints is conspicuous, it leads ministers and gracious people to give thanks to God. Paul says, “We give thanks to God and the Father, praying always for you since we heard of your hope.” I do not know a greater delight that a minister can have than the thought of all his people entering the bliss of Heaven and of his meeting them all there! We hardly have time to know each other here below. We have loved each other in the Lord and we have strived together in the service of God—and some of us are old fellowsoldiers. Now, after many years of Christian warfare, how pleasant it will be to dwell together above the world without end!  
Some have gone home whom we dearly loved and would almost have detained if we could. And there are others among us who in the order of Nature will soon be translated—happy are we because we cannot long be separated! The age of some among us prophesies their speedy departure and foreshadows that they will soon go over to the majority—but it is a most blessed reflection that all of us who are in Christ shall meet together above. We shall have ample room and space enough for fellowship when we have reached eternity—and what will our joy be then! Perhaps some of you will say to me when we converse in heavenly language— “You remember talking to us concerning the blessed hope on that fine Lord’s-Day morning, but you did not know much about it! We said then, ‘The half has not been told us,’ but now we perceive you did not tell us the onehundredth part! Still we were glad to share in the joy of what little we did know and in the blessed hope of knowing so much more.” Oh yes, dear Friends, because the hope of Heaven in us helps to make other people thank God on our account, it is a sweet Grace and mightily influential— and the more we have of it the better!  
Moreover, hearing of their hope led the Apostle to pray and, if you will follow me in reading the words which succeed the text, you will see what he desired for his friends at Colosse. In the ninth verse you will see what he prayed for. He says, “For this cause we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Having believed in Jesus and loving His people, you are going to Heaven and so Paul says, “I desire that you be filled with the knowledge of His will,” and well may he so desire, since to do that will is the joy and business of Heaven! Is not our prayer, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”? Brethren, let us learn the will of the Lord now and so be educated for the skies!  
Here we are to go through our apprenticeship that we may be able to take up our freedom as citizens of the New Jerusalem. Here we are at school, preparing to take our degree above, among the instructed saints of God! Are we to enter Heaven ignorant of what the will of the Lord is? Surely we ought to know something of the ways of the place and something of the rules of the court! This part of our life below is intended to be a prelude to our life above—a preparation for perfection! Here below we undergo the tuning of the instruments. It is not meet that there should be discordant scrapings and screwing of strings in Heaven! No, let us do all that here! Let us have our harps tuned below so that when we reach the orchestra of the skies we may take our right place and drop into the right note directly. A good hope should make you eager to know the will of the Lord! It should purify you even as Christ is pure and make you anxious to begin the perfect service of Heaven while yet you linger below!  
Then the Apostle prays, “that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Is it not fit that you who are to rise to Enoch’s Heaven should walk as he did and have this testimony that you please God? You are going to dwell at God’s right hand where there are pleasures forevermore—would you not wish to do all you can to please your Lord before you see Him? You are a son or daughter of a King! You have not put on your glittering array as yet—your crown is not yet on your head—but surely you wish to behave yourself as becomes one who is foreordained for so much honor and glory! If a son is in a distant country and is coming home, he begins to think, “What can I take home? What can I do to please the beloved father whom I am soon to see?” Begin, Beloved, to see what you can do to please God because you are so soon to enter into His pleasure and dwell with those that wear white robes, “for they are worthy”!  
Next he says, “Being fruitful in every good work.” Why, if there is to be such a rich reward of Grace, let us bear all the gracious fruit we can! And if the time of working is so soon to be over, let us be instant in every holy labor while yet the season is with us! Who wants to go into Heaven emptyhanded? Who wishes to spend the time of his sojourning here in idleness? Oh no! Let us seek to be fruitful to the Glory of God that so we may have an abundant entrance into the kingdom! The Apostle further adds, “Increasing in the knowledge of God.” If I am going to dwell with God, let me know something of Him. Let me search His Word and see how He has revealed Himself. Let me endeavor to have fellowship with Him and His Son, Jesus, that I may know Him. How can I enter Heaven as a total stranger to Him who is the King of it? Is not the knowledge of God as necessary as it is desirable?  
Those who have a good hope of Heaven will not rest without knowing the Lord, from the least even to the greatest of them. If anyone were to make you a present of a great estate, no matter in what country it might be situated, you would feel an interest in the land and its neighborhood— and before nightfall you would be found enquiring about the place! No matter how rustic the neighborhood or remote the locality, you would set your thoughts towards it if you knew the estate to be yours. As a usual thing, one of the driest documents in all the world is a rich man’s will. If you have ever heard one read you will know how it proses on and on in that rigmarole fashion dear to lawyers! But if you are present when it is read to the family, please notice how, “my son John’s” eyes clear up when it comes to the clause which concerns himself and how even the aged countenance of “my faithful servant Jane” brightens when her small legacy is mentioned! Everyone is on the alert when his own interests are affected. Even so, he that has a hope in Heaven and an interest in Christ’s great Testament will, at once, take an interest in Divine things and will desire to increase in the knowledge of God.  
Once again, the Apostle says, “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” A hope of Heaven is a mighty strengthener for bearing the ills of life and the persecutions of the adversary. “It will soon be over,” says a man who looks for Heaven and, therefore, he is not over-weighted with grief. “It is an ill lodging,” said the traveler, “but I shall be away in the morning.” Well may we be strengthened with all might by the hope of Heaven! It is but reason that the exceeding weight of Heaven should cast into the shade this light affliction which is but for a moment! You will say, “But have you not worked this part of the chapter into your subject without any guarantee?”  
No. Here is my guarantee in the next verse—“Giving thanks unto the Father which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” I have been following the evident track of the Apostle’s thoughts. The Lord gives us a hope of glory and then He gives us a meetness for it and that meetness is largely worked in us by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of our hope. Cultivate, then, your hope, dear Brothers and Sisters! Make it to shine so plainly in you that your minister may hear of your hopefulness and joy! Cause observers to take note of it because you speak of Heaven and act as though you really expected to go there! Make the world know that you have a hope of Heaven! Make worldlings feel that you are a believer in eternal Glory and that you hope to be where Jesus is!  
Often surprise them as they see what they call your simplicity, but what is, in truth, only your sincerity while you treat as matter of fact the hope laid up for you in Heaven! The Lord grant it for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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÷Col 1.9

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PRACTICAL RESULTS  
NO. 1742

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30 1883, **BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For this cau se we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will inall wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing inthe knowledge of God.”  
*Col 1:9-10*.

FOR the Church that was at Colosse, Paul gave hearty thanks to God for many most important blessings, especially for their faith, their love and their hope. It would be a very useful exercise to our hearts if we would often give thanks to God for the gifts and Graces which we discover in our Christian Brothers and Sisters. I am afraid we are more inclined to spy out their faultsand to suppose that we deplore them, than we are to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in them and, from the bottom of our hearts, give thanks to God for them. Paul felt encouraged by what he saw in the Colossian Believers to pray to God to enrich them yet farther. It should be our desire that our best Brethren should be better and that those who are most like Jesus should be still more completely conformed to His image.

We cannot more wisely show our love to our friends than by, first, acknowledging the Grace which is in them—and then by praying that God may give them more! Paul, as with an eagle eye, surveyed the Church at Colosse, which he loved so well, and he noted that it was somewhat lacking in knowledge. The Colossian brotherhood differed considerably from the Church at Corinth which abounded in talent and was enriched with all knowledge. The Colossians had fewer gifted Brethren among them who could act as teachers and, though this was no fault of theirs, it impoverished them in the matter of knowledge—and as Paul would not have them be behind in any desirable attainment—he, therefore, prayed for them that they might be filled with knowledge in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

If you read this Epistle through, you will observe that Paul frequently alludes to knowledge and wisdom. To the point in which he judged the Church to be deficient, he turned his prayerful attention. He would not have them ignorant. He knew that spiritual ignorance is the constant source of error, instability and sorrow—and, therefore, he desired that they might be soundly taught in the things of God. Not that they were destitute of savingknowledge, for he says in the 6th verse that they “knew the Grace of God in truth,” and that they had brought forth fruits meet for salvation. But saving knowledge, though it is the most essential attainment, is not the onlyknowledge which a Christian should seek after. He should long to be usefulas well as to be safe.

Being himself delivered out of darkness, Paul strives to bring others into the marvelous light of Grace. Paul would have his Brethren thoroughly furnished for sacred service, knowing the will of the Lord, themselves, and able to teach others. He desired for them that they might possess comforting knowledge, strengtheningknowledge, edifyingknowledge, sanctifyingknowledge, directingknowledge—so that they might be ready for all the trials, duties and labors of life. Upon this subject I am led to make four observations and to enlarge upon each of them. May the Holy Spirit, by this discourse, build us up in the knowledge of God.

I. My first subject is THE GREAT VALUE OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER, for as soon as Paul felt his heart burning with love to the saints at Colosse and had heard of the work of the Spirit among them, he began to show His love by lifting up His heart in prayer for them. He did that for them which He knew would bless them. Notice that intercessory prayer is a very important part of the work of Christians for one another. We are not sent into the world to live unto ourselves, but we are members of one body—and each member is expected to contribute to the health and the comfort of the whole. It is true we cannot all preach, but we can all pray! We cannot all distribute alms from our substance, but we can all offer prayer from our hearts!

In temporal things we may not be able to enrich the Church for lack of substance, but if we fail to bless the Church by our prayers, it will be for lack of Divine Grace. Whatever you fail in, dearly Beloved—and I pray that you may in nothing fall behind—yet do not fail in prayer for all the saints, that every blessing may abound towards them! Intercessory prayer is to be esteemed as an invaluable proof of love and as the creator of more love. The man who will truly pray for me will certainly readily forgive me if I offend him. He will relieve me if I am in need and He will be prepared to assist me if I am engaged in a service too hard for me. Give us your earnest prayers and we know that we live in your hearts! How sweet it is to be permitted thus to manifest our love to one another!

When our hands are palsied, we can still pray! When our eyes grow dim, we can still see to pray! When, by sickness, we are altogether laid aside, we can still pray! And when we meet with cases in which we are unable to help, and yet are moved with sympathy for a Brother or Sister, our sympathy can always find one open channel, for we can pray—and by prayer call in the aid of One whose help is effectual. Therefore, by your love to your Lord and to all those who are in Him, I beseech you abound in intercessory prayer as the Apostle did.

Intercessory prayer, again, is most valuable because it is an infallible means of obtaining the blessings which we desire for our friends. It is not in vain that we ask, for it is written, “Everyone that asks receives.” It is not in vain that we intercede for others, for the Lord delights to answer such petitions. The unselfish devotion which pleads as eagerly for others as for itself is so pleasing to the Lord that He puts great honor upon it. If we desire any blessing for our friends, our best course is to pray—even if we would have them to be filled with knowledge in all wisdom, our safest course is to pray that it may be so.

Of course, we must not forget to instruct them and to aid them in their studies as far as lies in our power, for every honest prayer supposes the use of all proper means. But the instruction which we offer will be of no service unless we first bring down the blessing of God upon it, that thereby our friends may be made willing to learn and may receive the Truth of God not as the word of man, but as from the Lord, Himself. None but spiritualteaching will nourish spiritual life. The Holy Spirit must teach Divine Truth to the heart, or it will never be truly known. Whatever you wisely desire for your friend, strive to get it for him, but hasten, first, to the Throne of Grace. If you would have your friend converted; if you would have him strengthened; if you would have him taught of God; if you would have him quickened to a nobler life and elevated to a higher consecration, do him this great service—take his case before the Lord in prayer—and in so doing you have gone the wisest way to work to enrich him.

Note, Brothers and Sisters, for I am keeping to my text closely, that such intercessory prayer will be all the more valuable if it is our immediate resort. The Apostle says, “Since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you.” He began to pray at once! Whenever you perceive the work of the Spirit in any heart, pray at once that the holy change may proceed with power. Whenever you discover any need in a Brother, begin on the day you hear of it to pray that his need may be supplied. There should be no delaying of prayer! “He gives twice who gives quickly” is a human proverb, but I believe that when we

pray speedily we shall often find that God, in answering quickly, gives us a double blessing. Usually he who is the most diligent in the pursuit of them shall win worldly riches—and assuredly he shall be richest towards God who is most diligent in supplication. Linger not a minute! Speed on to the Mercy Seat. Now is the accepted time; the Lord waits to be gracious to you! The Lord indicates to you what your prayer shall be by the news, which you have just heard of your friend. Therefore, bring his case at once before the Throne of Grace. Divine Providence has brought the necessary subject for prayer under your notice; therefore begin to pray about it at once!

Our prayers will be all the more valuable if they are incessant as well as immediate. “We cease not,” said Paul, “to pray for you since the day we heard it.” “Oh,” says one, “was Paul alwayspraying for the Colossians from the day he heard of their welfare? It may have been months and years! Did he never cease to pray?” I answer, he was always praying for them in the sense which he explains—he adds, “and to desire.” Now, desire is the essence of prayer. In fact, desire is the kernelof prayer. The vocal expressions which we call by the name of prayer are often but its shell—inward desire is the life, the heart, the reality of prayer! Though you cannot always be speakingin prayer, you can always be desiring in prayer. The miser is always desiring riches, though he is not always talking about his gold and silver. And the man who loves his fellow men and desires their profit is really always praying for their benefit, though he is not always lifting up his voice in supplication. “Since the day we heard it,” says Paul, “we do not cease to pray for you.”

The act of prayer is blessed, but the habitof prayer is more blessed—and the spirit of prayeris the most blessed of all—and it is thisthat we can continue for months and years. The act of prayer must, from force of circumstances, be sometimes stopped, but the habit of prayer should be fixed and unvarying. And the spirit of prayer, which is fervent desire, should be perpetual and abiding. We can hardly realize the value to the Church and to the world of that intercessory prayer which ceases not, day or night, but without fail ascends before the Lord from the whole company of the faithful, as the incense ascended from the altar!

Dear Friends, our intercessory prayer will be all the more precious if it is an intense expression unto God. I suppose that by the use of the word, “desire,” here, the Apostle not only explains how he continued to pray, but in what manner he prayed—with “desire.” Remember how our Lord puts it—“with desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” I wish we could always say, “with desire have I desired in prayer. I did not repeat a merely complimentary benediction upon my friends, but I pleaded for them as for my life. I importuned with God; I offered an effectual in-wrought prayer which rose from the depths of my heart to the heights of Heaven and obtained an audience with God.” Fervency is a great essential for victorious prayer. God grant us to be importunate, for then we shall be invincible!

One more observation and I have done with this point. Intercessory prayer is increased in value when it is not from one person, alone, but is offered in intimate union with other saints. Paul says, “We, also,” not, “I, only,” but, “ we,also, since the day we heard it, cease not.” If two of you agree as touching anything concerning the Kingdom of God, you have the blessing secured to you by a special promise of God. Remember how Abraham prayed for the cities of the plain, but succeeded not until Lot also added his supplication for Zoar? Then the little city was spared. I compare Abraham’s intercession to a ton weight of prayer, and poor Lot’s I can hardly reckon to have been more than half an ounce, but still that half-ounce turned the scale!

So here is Paul—and with him is youthful Timothy, who, compared with Paul, is meaningless! Yet Paul’s prayer is all the more effectual because Timothy’s prayer is joined with it. Our Lord sent out His servants by two and two, and it is well when they come back to Him in prayer two and two. I commend to you, Brothers and Sisters, the habit of frequent prayer together. When a Christian friend drops in, his visit will, perhaps, end in mere talk unless you secure its spiritual profit by at least a few minutes spent in united prayer. I frequently, during the day, when a friend comes in upon the Master’s business, say, “Let us pray before you go,” and I always find the request is welcomed. Such prayers do not occupy much time, but if they did, it might be well spent—such united supplications oil the wheels of life’s heavy wagon and cause it to move with less of that creaking which we too often hear. “I, alone” is certainly a good word in prayer, but, “we, also” is a better one! Let us link hands and intercede for our Brethren and the whole Church of God.

Thus have I expatiated upon the excellencies which increase the value of intercessory prayer. Use much this heavenly art. It is effectual for 10,000 ends. It turns every way to bless the Church. Brothers and Sisters, pray for us, pray for all saints, pray for all sinners and, by doing so you will be the benefactors of your age.

II. Our second observation from the text is this—we learn, here, THE PRECIOUSNESS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE—for all this earnest, ceaseless prayer is offered for this end, “That you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Here let us speak of the usefulness and blessedness of that spiritual knowledge for which the Apostle and his friend cried incessantly unto the Lord. First, consider the men for whom this knowledge is desired. They are saints and faithful Brethren, of whom we read that they “knew the Grace of God in truth,” and were, “bringing forth fruit” unto God. For those who already know the Lord we must not cease to pray. They are not beyond the need of our prayers while they are in this life.

We may pray for those who know nothing of the Lord, that He would open their blind eyes—but even those who have already been taught of God are in need of our supplications that they may learn yet more. We have great encouragement to pray that they may be filled with all knowledge, since the Lord has already done so much for them. We dare not say in this case that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, for a little knowledge of the things of God may suffice to save the soul, but more knowledge is a most desirable thing for those who have that little knowledge! Pray, therefore, for them. Let not your prayers plead only and altogether for the unconverted, but entreat for our young converts, that they may be further edified. It will be an ill day when we are so engaged in seeking lost sheep that we forget the lambs! It would be very mischievous for us to neglect our work at home in order to carry on warfare with the adversary abroad.

No, let us daily cry to God in prayer that the stones lately quarried may be built up upon the one Foundation and embedded in the walls of the Church of God unto eternal glory! We desire life for the dead, health for the living and maturity for the healthy. For the deeper instruction of our younger Brothers and Sisters let us pray. Of this desirable knowledge, what is the measure? We desire for them, “that they may be filledwith the knowledge of His will.” Filled—this is grand scholarship, to have the mind, heart and the whole of our manhood filled with knowledge! Paul would not have a Believer ignorant upon anypoint—he would have him filledwith knowledge, for when a measure is full of wheat there is no room for chaff. True knowledge excludes error.

The men that go after false doctrine are usually those who know little of the Word of God. Being untaught, they are unstable, ready to be blown about with every wind of doctrine. It you leave empty spots in your minds unsaturated with holy teaching, they will be an invitation to the devil to enter in and dwell there. Fill up the soul and so shut out the enemy! Paul desired the Colossian saints to be filled—filled up to the brim with the knowledge of God’s will! Brethren, we would have you know all that you can know of God’s Truth! Rome flourishes by man’s ignorance, but the New Jerusalem rejoices in the Light of God! No knowledge of the revealed will of God can ever do you any harm if it is sanctified. Do not be afraid of what they call, “high doctrines,” or the, “deep things of God.” They tell us

that those things are secrets and, therefore, we ought not to pry into them.

If they are secrets, there is no fear that anybody can pry into them! But the Truths of God revealed in the Word of God are no longer secrets, seeing that they are revealed to us by the Spirit of God—and as far as they are revealed, it should be our desire to understand them—so as to be filled with the knowledge of them. Let us try to know the Divine Truths of God more and more intimately. You know a man, for you pass him in the streets with a nod. You know another man far better, for you lodge in the same house with him. You know him best of all when you have shared his trouble, partaken in his joy and have, in fact, had fellowship with him by blending your two lives in one common stream of friendship. When you learn a spiritual Truth, endeavor to know it inside out—to know its foundation and building—to know it by the application of the Spirit to your own soul so that you are filled with it.

You may have knowledge in the brain, but it may not run into your spirit, so as to penetrate, permeate and saturate your spirit, till you are filled with it. Oh, to get the Gospel into one’s entire nature and to be like the water pots of Cana, filled up to the brim! Lord, fill Your poor children with the knowledge of Your will! This makes me notice what the matter of this knowledge is—“filled with the knowledge of His will.” What is that? It means the revealed will of God! Paul would have the Colossians know what the Lord has revealed, as far as human mind could grasp it, whether it were doctrine, precept, experience, or prophecy. How well it is to know the perceptive will of God! Our prayer should daily be, “Lord, what will You have me do?” Lord, teach me what is sin and what is righteousness, that I may discern things which are excellent. Whereas there are questions in the Church of God, itself, upon what the will of the Lord is, Lord help me not to care to know what is the will of this learned doctor, or what is the will of a certain assembly, but what is YOUR will!

“To the law and to the testimony”—this is our touchstone. Our desire is to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord’s will so as to do it without fail. Especially would we know the will of God as it constitutes the Gospel, for Jesus says, “This is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life.” Oh, to know His will in that respect most clearly, so as to go and tell it out on all sides, that men may know the way of life and may be led into it by our word! Once more we read in 1Th 4:3—“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” Oh, to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord’s will till you know what sanctification meansand exhibit it in your daily life! It is yours to teach men what God means by holiness! Your mission is not fulfilled and the will of God is not accomplished unless you are sanctified! This it is with which we need to be filled! Know anything, know everything that is worth knowing! “That the soul is without knowledge is not good.”

Never attempt to run side by side with the agnostic whose glory it is that he knows nothing. But let it be your delight to know all that can be learned out of the Book of the Lord, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Concentrate your faculties upon the will of God. Here dive into the deeps and climb up to the heights and be afraid of nothing! Ask the Holy Spirit to saturate you with His Truth, as Gideon’s fleece was wet with the dew of Heaven, as the golden pot was filled with manna, or as Jordan is filled in the time of harvest when it overflows all its banks!

Still we have not done, for we must now notice the manneras well as the matter of this knowledge—“in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Wisdom is better than knowledge, for wisdom is knowledge rightly used. Knowledge may find room for folly, but wisdom casts it out. Knowledge may be the horse, but wisdom is the driver. When a man has knowledge, it is like the corn which is laid in the barn. But wisdom is the fine flour prepared for food. We need Christian people not only to know, but to usewhat they know! Happy is he who knows what to do at the right time! Many people are very knowing half an hour after it is too late—but to be filled with wisdom is to be able, at once, to apply knowledge rightly in difficult cases. Wisdom enables you to bring your knowledge practically to bear upon life, to separate between the precious and the vile, to deal with your fellow Christians in their different conditions—and to deal with sinners and those that are in need.

You need wisdom so to conduct your affairs that nothing therein shall scandalize the weak, or bring dishonor upon the name of Christ—mere knowledge will not suffice for this. Knowledge is the blade, wisdom is the full corn in the ear. Knowledge is the cloth, but wisdom is the garment. Knowledge is the timber, but wisdom has built her house. May all our knowledge be sanctified by Grace and attended with the guidance of the Spirit that we may become wise to know what the will of the Lord is. “All wisdom,” says the Apostle—many-handed wisdom, wisdom of all sorts, wisdom that will serve you in the shop, wisdom that will be useful in the counting-house, wisdom that will aid the Church of God and wisdom that will guide you if you are cast among the vilest of mankind. May you “be filled with knowledge in all wisdom.”

But that wisdom which operates on the outside must be attended by a spiritual understanding which is powerful within. I hardly know how to explain this—it is an inward knowledge of truth—the knowledge of the inward parts of things. It is a spiritual discernment, taste, experience and reception of the Truths of God, whereby the soul feeds upon them and takes them into herself. We know many men who know much but understand nothing. They accept implicitly what they are taught, but they have never considered it, weighed it, estimated it, found out the roots of it, or seen the heart of it. Oh, to have in the Church men full of spiritual understanding! These can say that they have tasted and handled the good Word of Life and have proved and tested the Truth as it is in Jesus! You know how it was with the sacrifices of old—a man who was poor brought turtle-doves or pigeons—and of these we read of each bird, “The priest shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder.”

But a man who was rich in Israel brought a bullock or a sheep—and this offering was not only cleft down the middle, but further divided—the fat and the “inwards” are mentioned in detail. The poorer sacrifice represents the offering of the uninstructed—they have never rightly divided the Word of God and know not its fullness of meaning. But the man who is rich in Grace is comparable to him who brought his bullock, for he can enter into detail and see the secret meanings of the Word. There is a deep, which lies under, and he that is taught of the Lord shall find it. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant.” And blessed are they that are taught of the Lord so as to read the mystery of His Grace! Here, then, is a grand petition for us.

To go back to our first head, let our intercessory prayers go up for all our Brothers and Sisters. Lord, teach them Your Word! Let them know Your Book from cover to cover, and let Your Truths revealed therein enter into them until they are filled to the brim! Then Lord, grant them the skill to use in daily life the knowledge which Your Spirit has imparted and may they more and more, in their inmost souls, be guided into all Your Truth, that they may comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

III. Now, thirdly, let us see in the text a lesson concerning THE PRACTICAL RESULT OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Paul prays for his friends “that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” See, see the drift of his prayer?—“That you may walk.” Not that you might talk; not that you might sit down and meditate and enjoy yourselves, but, “that you might walk.” He aims at practical results! He desires that the saints may be instructed so that they may walk according to the best model. By walking worthy of the Lord Jesus, we do not understand in any sense that he expected them to possess such worthiness as to deserve to walk withthe Lord—but he would have them live in a manner that should be in accordance with their communion with Christ.

You would not have a man walk with Christ through the streets, today, clothed in motley garments, or loathsome with filth—would you? No, if a man is a leper, Christ will heal him before He will walk with him! Let not a disciple walk so as to bring disgrace upon his Lord! When you walk with a king, you should be, yourself, royal in gait. When you commune with a prince, you should not act the clown. Dear Friends, may you know so much of Jesus that your lives shall become Christ-like, fit to be put side by side with the Character of Jesus, worthy of your perfect Lord! This is a high standard, is it not? It is always better to have a high standard than a low one, for you will never go beyond that which you set up as your model. If you set a low standard, you will fall below even that! It is an old proverb, “He that aims at the moon will shoot higher than he that aims at a bush.” It is well to have no lower standard than the desire to live, over again, the life of the Lord Jesus—a life of tenderness, a life of self-sacrifice, a life of generosity, a life of love, a life of honesty, a life of holy service—a life of close communion with God. Mix all virtues in due proportion and that is the life of Jesus towards which you must press forward with all your heart.

Next, the Apostle would have us get knowledge in order that we may so live as to be pleasing to our best Friend—“worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Is not that beautiful? To live so as to please God in all respects! Some live to please themselves, while others to please their neighbors. Some live to please their wives; some to please their children, and some live as if they wished to please the devil! But our business is to please Him in all things whose servants we are. Without faith it is impossible to please Him—so away with unbelief! Without holiness no man shall see Him, much less please Him—therefore let us follow after holiness and may the Lord work it in us! “Unto all pleasing”—so that we may please God from the moment we rise in the morning to the time when we lie down! Yes, and please Him even when we are asleep! That we may eat and drink so as to please Him; that we may speak and think so as to please Him; that we may go or stay so as to please Him; that we may rejoice or suffer so as to please Him—“walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.”

Oh, blessed is the man whose life is pleasing to God in all respects! The Apostle Paul desires that we may be filled with knowledge to this very end. If I do not knowthe will of God, how can I dothe will of God? At least, how can there be anything pleasing to God which is ignorantly done without an intent to do His will? I fear that many children of God grieve their heavenly Father through sins of ignorance—an ignorance in which they ought not to remain a single day! Be it clearly understood that sins of ignorance are truly sins. They have not about them the venom and the aggravation which are found in sins against the Light and knowledge of God, but they are still sins, for the measure of our duty is not ourlight, but the Law of God itself. If a man pleads that he follows his conscience, yet this will not excuse his wrongdoing if his conscience is an unenlightened conscience and he is content to keep it in the dark. You are to obey the will of the Lord—that will is the standard of the sanctuary.

Our conscience is often like a deficient weight and deceives us. It is ours to gather a clear knowledge of the Word of God, that we may prove what is that perfect and acceptable will of God. The law makes no allowance for errors committed through false weights. When a man says, “I thought my weights and measures were all right,” he is not, therefore, excused. The law deals with facts, not with men’s imaginations! The weights must actually be correct, or the penalty is exacted. So is it with conscience—it ought to be instructed in the knowledge of the Divine will—and if it is not, its faultiness affords no justification for evil. Hence the absolute necessity of knowledge in order to true holiness. God grant us Grace to know His will and then to obeyit “unto all pleasing.”

Look at the text again—“That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful.” Paul would have us producing the best fruit. Without knowledge, we cannot be fruitful—at least in the points where we are ignorant we must fail to bring forth fruit. Therefore he would have us to be taught well, that we may abundantly produce fruit unto God’s Glory. He says, “fruitful in every good work,” and this means much. He desires us to be as full of good works as we can be. Some are hindered in this because they do not know how to set about holy service. How can a man be fruitful as a preacher if he does not know what to preach? True, he may preach the elementary doctrine of the Cross, but even that he will be apt to set forth in a blundering manner. For certain, a man cannot teach what he does not know. The zealous, but untaught man, would be much more fruitful if he had a clearer understanding of Divine things.

In daily life, if in knowledge you are ignorant as to the things of God, you will be ready to become the prey of any false teacher who may chance to pick you up. In hundreds of ways, ignorance will make you run risks, lose opportunities of usefulness and fall into dangerous mistakes. Knowledge is food to the true heart and strengthens it for the Lord’s work. Oh, to have knowledge placed like good soil around the roots of the soul, to fertilize the mind that thus the clusters of usefulness may be as large as those of Eschol—beautiful, plentiful, sweet and full. May our Lord, the King of Israel, to whom the vineyard belongs, receive an abundant reward for all His labor for the vines which He has planted!

There is another note in this verse, which I beg you to notice. Paul would have them cultivate a comprehensive variety of the best things. He says—“Fruitful in every good work.” Here is room and range enough—“in every good work.” Have you the ability to preach the Gospel? Preach it! Does a little child need comforting? Comfort it! Can you stand up and vindicate a glorious Truth of God before thousands? Do it! Does a poor saint need a bit of dinner from your table? Send it to her! Let works of obedience, testimony, zeal, charity, piety and philanthropy all be found in your life. Do not select only big things as your specialty, but also glorify the Lord in the littles—“fruitful in everygood work.” You never saw in nature a tree which yielded all sorts of fruit and you never will.

I have seen a tree so grafted that it produced four kinds of fruit at one time, but I remarked that it was a poor business in reference to two of the varieties, for one of the grafts, more natural than the others to the parent stem, drew off most of the sap and flourished well, but robbed the other branches! The second sort of fruit managed to live pretty fairly, but not so well as it would have done on its own stem. As for the third and fourth, they were mere attemptsat fruit of the smallest size. This tree was shown to me as a great curiosity—it is not likely that practical gardeners will be encouraged by the experiment! But what would you think of a tree upon which you saw grapes, figs, olives, apples and all other good fruits growing at one time? This is the type of what instructed Believers will become—they will produce all sorts of goodness and graciousness to the honor of their heavenly Father!

I have no doubt that you will naturally abound most in certain good works for which you have the largest capacity, but still, nothing ought to come amiss to you. In the great house of the Church we need servants who will not be simply cooks or housemaids, but general servants, maids of all work, prepared to do anything and everything! I have known persons in household employment in England who would not do a turn beyond their special work to save their masters’ lives! These are a sort of servants of whom the fewer the better! In India this is carried out to a ridiculous extreme. The Hindu water-bearer will not sweep the house, nor light a fire, nor brush your clothes—he will fetch water and nothing else! You must, therefore, have a servant for each separate thing, and then each man will do his own little bit—he will not go an inch beyond!

When we enter into Christ’s Church, we should come prepared to wash the saints’ feet, or bear their burdens, or bind up their wounds, or fight their foes, or act as steward, or shepherd, or nurse. It has been well said that if two angels in Heaven were summoned to serve the Lord and there were two works to be done, an empire to be ruled, or a crossing to be swept, neither angel would have a choice as to which should be appointed to him, but would gladly abide the will of the Lord. Let us be equally prepared for anything, for everything by which fruit can be produced for the Well-Beloved. Why is it that some are not fruitful in this comprehensive way? Because they are not filled with knowledge in all wisdom! When a man says, “You asked me to do the lowest work! Don’t you know that I am a man of remarkable ability who should have higher work to do?” I venture to assert that he is an ignorant man! Self-assertion is ignorance on horseback!

You have probably read of a certain renowned corporal in the American service a century ago. A general, as he rode along, saw a body of men endeavoring to lift timber. They were shorthanded and the work lagged, but their famous corporal stood by ordering them about at a magnificent rate. The general passed and said, “Why don’t you lend them help and put your shoulder to it? “Why, Sir,” said the great little officer, “how can you think of such a thing? Do you know who I am? I am a corporal!” The general got off his horse, took off his coat, and helped move the timber—and by his judicious help the soldiers achieved their task. Then he turned to the high and mighty gentleman and said, “Mr. Corporal, next time you need a man to do such work as this, you can send for me—I am General Washington.”

Just so the Lord Jesus Christ, if He were here, would gladly do a thousand things which His poor little servants are too great to touch! I know you, dear Brother—you are too experienced, too old, too learned to help in the Sunday school! I know you are too respectable to give away a tract! Pray get out of such ignorant ways of thinking and ask to be useful in all possible ways! If you have done a little, do much! If you have done much, do more! And when you have done more, ask for Grace to proceed to the highest possible degree of usefulness for your Lord.

IV. And now, fourthly, notice THE REFLEX ACTION OF HOLINESS UPON KNOWLEDGE. We have only a few moments left—let my few words sink into your hearts. “Fruitful in every good work”—what then? “Increasing in the knowledge of God.” Look at that! It seems, then, that holiness is the road to knowledge! God has made it so. If any man will do His will, he shall know of His doctrine. If you read and study, and cannot make out the meaning of Scripture, get up and do something— and it may be, in the doing of it, you shall discover the secret. Holiness of heart shall increase the illumination of your mind!

Will you kindly observe that this knowledge rises in tone? Paul first prayed that they “might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will.” But nowhe implores for them an increase in the knowledge of God, Himself! Oh, blessed growth! First to know the Lawand then to know the Lawgiver! First to know the precept, and then to know the mouth from which it comes! This is the height of knowledge— to see Christ and know the Father, and learn how to say from the heart—“Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” I would call your willing attention to another thought. The Apostle, if he is to be judged according to his outward language, often utters impossible things, and yet his every sentence is not only full of deep meaning, but is strictly correct!

Notice his language here—in the 9th verse he says, “that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Can anything go beyond this? The vessel is filled right up to the brim! What more can it have? Yet the Apostle says, “ increasingin the knowledge of God.” What can that mean? If the mind is full to the brim, how can it receive more? If the man is full of knowledge, how can his knowledge increase? Can there be any increase after that? I propose to you the riddle. Here is the answer—make the vessel larger—and then there can be an increase. This solution of the difficulty requires no great wit to discover. So Paul plainly teaches us here, that if we have so increased in knowledge as to be full, he would have us increased in capacity to know yet more!

He would have our manhood enlarged and our powers of reception increased so that we might grow from being children to be young men—and from young men to be fathers, and so may be filled—filled always! Filled with all the fullness of God! The Lord grant unto us to perceive with humility that if we are already full of knowledge, we can still advance, for we “have not yet attained.” Let no man think that he can go no further! “There is,” says Augustine, “a certain perfection according to the measure of this life. And it belongs to that perfection that such a perfect man should know that he is not yet perfect.” To that I heartily subscribe! There is a certain fullness to be found in this life according to the measure of a man. And it belongs to that fullness that the man should know that he can yet increase in knowledge!

Holy Bernard says, “He is not good at all who does not desire to be better.” I also subscribe to that saying! Some might become good if they were not puffed up with the fancy of their own perfection. Others are somewhat commendable, but will never grow because they judge themselves to be already full-grown. I would have you filled and yet have room for more—filled with all knowledge, filled with all holiness, filled with the indwelling Spirit, filled with God—and yet increasing in knowledge, in holiness, in likeness to God and in all good things forevermore to His Glory! The Lord add His blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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÷Col 1.12

“A PREPARED PLACE FOR A PREPARED PEOPLE”  
NO. 2751

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1879.

**“I go to prepare a place for you.”***Joh 14:2***.**

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”** *Col 1:12***.**

MY real text is not in the Bible—it is one of those Christian proverbs which are not Inspired in words, but the spirit of which is Inspired, “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” You have often heard that sentence. It is familiar in your mouths as household words, and well it may be.

Yet I shall have two texts from the Scriptures. The first will be our Savior’s words to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you,” from which we learn that “Heaven is a prepared place.” And the second will be Paul’s words to the Colossians, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light,” from which we learn that there is a prepared people, a people made qualified to be partakers of the inheritance which Christ has gone to prepare for them!

I. I am not going to have any further preface, but I will begin at once to speak upon THE PREPARATION OF HEAVEN. “I go to prepare a place for you.”

It is many months since I began to turn this sentence over. I think I might truly say that for several years I have thought of it, and thought of it again, and thought of it yet again—that our Lord Jesus Christ, before returning to Heaven, should say to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Is there any difficulty about this passage? Yes, it is very difficult to explain. Indeed, I do not think that we really can know all that Christ meant when He uttered these words. A father said to his children, when the summer sun had waxed hot, “I shall go to the seaside today to prepare a place for you.” His little child asked, “What does father mean when he says that he will prepare a place for us?” And his mother answered, “My child, I cannot tell you all that your father means, but you will see when you get there. But now it must be enough for you that although you do not know what Father will have to do at the seaside in preparing a place for you, he knows what he is going to do.”

And, dear Friends, there is this consolation for us that even if we can hardly guess what it is that Christ can find to do to prepare Heaven for us, He knows what is needed, and He knows how to do it! And that is infinitely better than our knowing, because even if we knew what was needed, we could not do it. But with Christ to know and to do are two things that run parallel. He knows that there are certain preparations to be made. He knows what those preparations must be and He is equal to the task of making them! He has not gone upon an errand which He cannot fulfill. And when we get to Heaven, we shall know—perhaps it may take us a long while to find it all out—but we shall know and discover throughout eternity what He meant when He said, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

I do not profess to be able to explain our Lord’s words, but I am going simply to make a few remarks upon them. And first, I ask you to notice that Heaven is already prepared for Christ’s people. Christ has told us that when He comes in His Glory, He will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” So, there is an inheritance which the Father has already prepared for the people whom He gave to His Son— and this inheritance is reserved for them. But if it was prepared from the foundation of the world, how can it be said to be prepared by Christ? The explanation probably is that it was prepared in the eternal purpose of the Father—prepared by wise forethought—arranged for—predestinated— prepared in that sense—it was provided in the eternal arrangements of Jehovah, that there should be a suitable place for His people to dwell in forever. He made the pavilion of the sun and He gave the stars their appointed positions—would He forget to prepare a place for His people? He gave to angels their places and even to fallen spirits He has appointed a prison—so He would not forget, when He was arranging the entire universe, that a place would be needed for the twice-born, the heirs of Grace, the members of the mystical body of Christ Jesus, His brethren who were to be made like unto Him. Therefore, in purpose, plan and decree, long before God had laid the foundations of this poor world and the morning stars had sung together over creation’s six days’ work accomplished, He had prepared a place for His people! It was not actually prepared, but it was in the purpose and plan of the eternal mind and, therefore, might be regarded as already done.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has gone to Heaven, He says, that He may prepare a place for His servants, and we may be helped to form some idea of what He means by this expression if we just think a little about it. And, first, I am sure that must be a very great and glorious place which needs Christ to prepare. If we do not know all that He means, we can get at least this much out of His declaration. He spoke this world into being. It was not, but He said, “Be,” and it was at once made. Then He spoke it into order, into light, into life, into beauty. He had but to speak and what He willed was done. But now that He is preparing a place for His people. He has gone to Heaven on purpose to do it. He used to stand still here on earth and work miracles, but this was a miracle that He could not perform while He was here. He had to go back to His home above in order to prepare a place for His people. What sort of place, then, must it be that needs Christ Himself to prepare it? He might have said, “Angels, garnish a mansion for My Beloved.” He might have spoken to the firstborn sons of light and said, “Pile a temple of jewels for My chosen.” But, no, He leaves not the work to them, but He says, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

Brothers and Sisters, He will do it well, for He knows all about us. He knows what will give us the most happiness—and what will best develop all our spiritual faculties forever. He loves us, too, so well that as the preparing is left to Him, I know that He will prepare us nothing secondrate, nothing that could possibly be excelled. We shall have the best of the best, and much of it! We shall have all that even His great heart can give us! Nothing will be stinted for, as He is preparing it, it will be a right royal and Divine preparation. If, when the prodigal came back to his father, there was the preparation of the fatted calf, the music and dancing and the gold ring and the best robe, what will be the preparation when we do not come home as prodigals, but as the bride prepared for her husband, or as the Beloved children, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, coming home to the Father who shall see His own image in us and rejoice over us with singing? It is a grand place that Christ prepares, I know, for never was there another such a lordly host as He is! It is a mansion of delights, I know, that He prepares, for never was there another architect with thought so magnificent as His, and never were other hands so skilled at quarrying living stones and putting them, one upon another, as His hands have ever been! This thought ought to cheer us much—it must be something very wonderful that Christ prepares as a fit place for His people.

And I think I may add to this, that it must be something very sweet when it is prepared. If you go to a friend’s house and just fal1 in with the ordinary proceedings of the family, you are very comfortable and you are glad not to disarrange anything. But if, when you arrive, you see that everything has been done on an extra scale to prepare for your coming, you feel still more grateful. It has often happened to an honored guest that he could not help observing that he was not being treated as his friends lived every day of the week and all the year round. That guest chamber had evidently been newly furnished and everything that was possible had been thought of to do him honor. If you were treated thus as a guest, there was pleasure for you in the fact that so much had been prepared for you. Did your husband ever take you to a new house and point out to you how he had purchased everything that he thought would please you? Had that little room been furnished especially for you and did he anticipate your tastes, providing this little thing and that that he knew you would like? Well, it was not merely that you enjoyed the things, themselves, but they all seemed to you so much sweeter because they had been prepared for you by your beloved husband. And when you get to Heaven, you will be astonished to see this and that and the other joy that was prepared for you because Christ thought of you, and provided just what you would most appreciate. You will be no stranger there, Beloved! You will say, “There has been here a hand that helped me when I was in distress. There has been here, I know, an eye that saw me when I was wandering far from God. There has been in this place a heart that cared for me—that same heart that loved me and that bled for me down below upon the Cross. It is my Savior who has prepared this place for me!”

I do not know whether I can convey to you all my thoughts upon this theme, but it does seem to me so pleasant to think that we are going to a place where we shall not be the first travelers through the country but where a Pioneer has gone before us—the best of pioneers who went before us with this one objective in His mind, that He might get all ready and prepare the place for us. I think, Brothers and Sisters, that those who will be there before us will say, when we arrive there, “We are glad you have come, for everything has been prepared for you.” It would be an eternal sorrow in Heaven if the saints should miss their way and perish, as some falsely tell us, for then, what about the preparations for their reception? They would all have been made in vain—harps prepared which no fingers would ever play—and crowns which no heads would ever wear! I do not believe it! I have never dreamed that such a thing could happen. I feel certain that He who prepared the place for the people, will prepare the people for the place and that if He gets all ready for them, He means to bring them Home that they may enjoy the things which He has laid up for them that love Him.

I know that I am not explaining the preparation of Heaven, yet I hope I am draining some comfortable thoughts out of the subject. If Christ is preparing Heaven, then it will be what our Scotch friends call, “a bonny place.” And if it is prepared for us, when we get there, it will exactly fit us. It will be the very Heaven we wanted—a better Heaven than we ever dreamed of—a better Heaven than we ever pictured even when our imagination took its loftiest heights! The Heaven of God and yet a Heaven exactly suited to such happy creatures as we then shall be!

Now, however, let us try to come a little closer to the subject and attempt to explain our Lord’s words. Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for His people. Does not this refer, if we keep it to its strict meaning, to the ultimate place of God’s people? You see, Christ mentions a place, not a state. And He speaks of going to it, and coming back from it—“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself.” Christ is speaking of Himself in His full Manhood, without any figurative meaning to His words. He meant that He was going with all His Human Nature, away from this world. And that He was going to prepare a place for us, intending to come again, with all that glorified Human Nature about Him, to receive us unto Himself! This does not mean His spiritual coming in death, nor any kind of spiritual coming, as to its first meaning, at any rate. I am persuaded that the clear run of the words involves our Lord’s coming, in His Second Advent, when He will come to receive, not you or me as individuals who, one by one, will enter into rest, but to receive His whole Church into the place which He shall then have prepared for her. After the Resurrection, you must remember, we shall need a place to live—a literal, material place of abode, for this body of ours will be alive as well as our spirit and it will need a world to live in—a new Heaven and a new earth.

I am not going to enter into any speculations about the matter, but it seems clear enough to me, in this text, that Christ is preparing a place somewhere not for disembodied spirits, for they are already before the Throne of God perfectly blessed—but for the entire manhood of His people, when spirit, soul and body shall be again united and the complete man shall receive the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, and the whole manhood of every Believer shall be perfected in the Glory of Christ. I do not know what better world, in many respects, there could be than this, so far as material nature is concerned. It is so full of the beauty and loveliness that God pours upon it on every side! It is a wonderful world—

*“Where every prospect pleases,*

*And only man is vile”—*  
but I could not reconcile myself to the idea that this world would be Heaven. No. My thoughts rise far above the loftiest hills, the most flowery meadows, the rolling ocean and the flowing rivers. Earth has not space enough to be our Heaven! She has too narrow a boundary and she is too coarse a thing, bright gem though she is, for perfected manhood to possess throughout eternity! It will do well enough for the thousand years of Glory—if it shall literally be that—we shall reign with Christ upon it during the millennial age. But it is a drossy thing and if it ever is to be the scene of the new heavens and the new earth, it must first pass through the fire. The very smell of sin is upon it—and God will not use this globe as a vessel unto honor until He has purified it with fire as once He did with water. And then, perhaps, it may serve for this higher purpose, but I scarcely think it will. Even now Jesus is preparing and has gone away on purpose to prepare a place for us—and He will come again, “with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God”—and He will catch His people away and will bear them to the eternal home where their happiness shall know no end. That is what I suppose to be the meaning of our Lord’s words.

“But,” perhaps you say to me, “what do you mean by what you have been saying?” I reply—I do not know to the fullest. I can but dimly guess at the meaning of what my Lord has said—that He is doing something so glorious for ALL His people that, perhaps, if I did know it, I might not be allowed to tell you, for there are some things which, when a man knows them, it is not lawful for him to utter. Did not Paul see a great deal when he was caught up into paradise? Yet he has told us very little about it, for there was a finger laid upon his lips that bade him know it for himself, but not to tell it to others. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” And though He has “revealed them unto us by His Spirit,” even the Spirit who searches the deep things of God, yet is it not possible for us to tell all that has been revealed to us!

It strikes me that there is some little light to be obtained concerning this preparation of Heaven by Christ if I leave the direct and literal meaning of the words and think of the future state as a whole rather than in detail. Do you not think, dear Friends, that our Lord Jesus Christ prepares Heaven for His people by going there? I mean this. Supposing you were to be lifted up to a state which was looked upon as heavenly, but that Jesus was not there—it would be no Heaven to you. But wherever I may go, when I do go, if Jesus is already there, I do not care where it is! Wherever He is shall be my Heaven, for, as I said in the reading, [the exposition at the e and of the sermon] that is our very first and last thought about Heaven—to be with Christ where He is! To be with Christ is far better than to be anywhere else! Well, then, the first thing that Christ had to do, in order to prepare Heaven for His people, was to go to Heaven, for that made it Heaven! Then were Heaven’s lamps kindled. Then did Heaven’s heralds ring out their supernal melodies. Then did the whole of the New Jerusalem seem to be ablaze with a glory brighter than the sun, for, “the Lamb is the light thereof.” When He comes there, then all is bliss! Do you not see, Beloved, that He has prepared Heaven by going there? His being there will make it Heaven for you, so you need not begin asking what else there will be in Heaven! There will be all manner of rare delights to spiritual men, but the chief of them all will be that Jesus is there! As Rowland Hill used to sing, so may you and I comfort ourselves with this thought—

*“And this I do find—we two are so joined— He’ll not be in Glory and leave me behind.”*

*“And this I do find—we two are so joined—   
He’ll not be in Glory and leave me behind.”*If I may but be where He is, that shall be Heaven to me!   
But another reflection is this—that *our Lord Jesses Christ has prepared Heaven for His people by the merit of His Atonement.* Thus has He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. He tore the veil and made a way into the Holiest of All for all who trust Him. But, in addition to that, He perfumed Heaven with the fragrance of His Sacrifice. If Heaven is the place of the Godhead, as we know it is, we could not have stood there without the Mediator! If Heaven is the Throne of the great King, we could not have stood there without the cloud of perfumed incense from Christ’s meritorious death and righteousness ever rising up before that Throne of God! But now, Heaven is a safe place for the saints to enter. Now may they tread that sea of glass like as of fire and know that it is glass, and that no fire from it will consume them. Now will they be able to come up near to God and not be afraid. I quote again a passage that often leaps to my lips—a text of Scripture which is often shamefully misused—“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Why, none of us could unless Christ had changed us by His Grace—but now we may do so!   
What is the Scriptural answer to those questions, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” What do the Scriptures say? Listen! “He that walks righteously and speaks uprightly. He that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood and shuts his eyes from seeing evils. He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”   
This is the man who shall dwell there! With God, who is a consuming fire, we, like the holy children in the burning fiery furnace, shall find it safe to dwell and find it bliss to dwell because Christ is there! But there would have been no Heaven in the Presence of God for any man that lives, after sin had once come into the world, if Jesus had not gone there as the High Priest of old went up to the blazing throne whereon the Shekinah shone and sprinkled it with blood out of the basin, and then waved the censer to and fro till the thick smoke hid the cherubim and, for a while resting, spoke with God. Even so has Christ gone within the veil and sprinkled His own atoning blood upon His Father’s Throne and then waved aloft the censer full of the incense of His mercy! And now it is safe for us to have access with boldness to the Throne of Glory as well as to the Throne of Grace. Thus has He prepared a place for us!   
Another meaning, I think, is allowable, namely, that *Christ has prepared Heaven for usby appearing there in His Glory.* I said that His very Presence made Heaven, but now I add that His Glory there makes Heaven yet more glorious. How does Christ describe the heavenly state? “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.” It will be their bliss, then, to see His Glory, but there would have been no Glory for them to see if He had not gone there in His Glory! But now with His Presence there, in all His majesty and splendor, Heaven is still more glorious! Oh, how I long to see Him in His Glory! Long to see Him, did I say? I would part with all the joys of time and sense to gaze upon Him seated upon His Throne. Oh, what will it be to see Him? You have seen how painters have failed when they have tried to depict Him. The bravest artist may well tremble and the brightest colors fade when anyone tries to paint Him even in His humiliation! There is no other face so marred as His face was, but what will it be in Heaven when it is marred no more? No tear in His eyes! No spit running down His cheeks! No giving of His face to them that pluck out the hair, but, oh, the Glory of Manhood perfected and allied with Deity! “The King in His beauty!” Why, I think to see Him but for a minute, if we never saw Him again, might furnish us with an eternity of bliss! But we shall gaze upon Him, in His glory, day without night, never fainting, or flagging, or tiring, but delighting forever to behold Him smile, forevermore to call Him ours and to see Him still before us! He has gone to Heaven, then, in His Glory and, surely, that is preparing a place for us!  
Besides that, we cannot tell what arrangements had to be made in order to prepare a place of eternal blessedness for the Lord’s redeemed. Certain it is that in the economy of the universe, everything has its place. Men have discovered, as you know, what they call evolution. They think that one thing grows out of another because long before they were born everybody with half an eye could see that one thing fitted into another and, as one step rises above another step by a beautiful gradation, so do the created things of God. Not that they grow out of each other any more than the stones of a staircase grow out of one another—they rise above each other, but they were so made from the first by the skill and wisdom of God. That a dewdrop should be precisely of the size and shape that it is, is necessary to the perfection of the universe. That there should be insects born in such a month to fertilize the flowers that bloom in that month, and others to suck the sweetness of those flowers is all necessary. God has arranged everything, from the little to the great, with perfect skill. There is a place for everything with God and everything in its place.   
It was a question where to put man. He once had a place. When God created this world, He made a pyramid and set man upon the very top of it, giving him dominion over all the works of His hands. But then man fell. Now it is more difficult to restore than it was, at first, to place. Often and often you must have found that when a thing has gone awry, it has cost you more trouble to set it right than if it had to be made *de novo.* Where, then, was the place for man to be? O matchless Love, O sacred Wisdom that provided that man’s place should be where Christ’s place was and is! Lo, He who came down from Heaven and who was also in Heaven, has gone back to Heaven! He carried manhood with Him and, in so doing, one with Him, His Church, has found her place. His union to the Godhead has found a place for His Church at the right hand of God, even the Father, where Christ sits—and all is as it should be!   
As I have already told you, I do not know much about this matter, but I should not wonder if there has been going on, ever since Christ went up to Heaven, a putting things straight—getting this race of creatures into its proper place and that other race, and the other race, so that, when we get to Heaven, nobody will say, “You have got my place.” Not even Gabriel will say to me, “Why, what business have you here? You have got my place.” No, no—you shall have a place of your own, Beloved—and all the members of Christ’s Church shall find a place prepared which no one else shall be able to claim, for nobody shall be dispossessed or put out of his rightful position.   
It struck me, as I turned this subject over in my mind, that *our Lord Jesus Christ knew thatthere was a place tobe prepared for each one ofHis people.* It may be—I cannot tell—that in some part of the society of Heaven, one spirit will be happier than it might have been in another part. You know that even though you love all the Brethren, you cannot help feeling most at home with some of them. Our blessed Lord and Master had no sinful favoritism, yet He did love 12 men better than all the rest of His disciples. And out of the 12 He loved three whom He introduced into mysteries from which He excluded the other nine. And even out of the three, there was one, you know, who was “that disciple whom Jesus loved.” Now, everybody here has his favorites. I do not know if we shall carry anything of that spirit to Heaven. If we do, Christ has so prepared a place for us that you shall be nearest, in your position and occupation, to those who would contribute most to your happiness. You shall be where you can most honor God and most enjoy God. You would be glad enough to be anywhere—would you not?—with the very least of the saints in Heaven if there ‘be any degrees of glory’ among their thrones, or at His feet, as long as you might see Christ’s face. But, depend upon it, if there is any association—any more intimate connection—between some saints than among others, Jesus Christ will so beautifully arrange it that we shall all be in the happiest places.   
If you were to give a dinner party and you had a number of friends there, you would like to pick the seats for them. You would say, “Now, there is So-and-So. I know that he would like to sit next to So-and-So.” And you would try to arrange it so. Well, in that grand wedding feast above, our Savior has so prepared a place for us that He will find us each the right position. I was talking, this afternoon, with one whom I very dearly love and she said to me, “I hope my place in Heaven will not be far from yours.” And I replied, “Well, I trust so, too, but we are not married or given in marriage there.” Such ties and such relationships must end, as far as they are after the flesh, but we know that there have been bonds of spirit that may still continue. I sometimes think that if I could have any choice as to those I should live near in Heaven, I should like to live in the region of such strange folk as Rowland Hill and John Berridge. I think I should get on best with them, for we could talk together of the way wherein God led us and of how He brought souls to Christ by us. Though some said that we were a deal too merry when we were down below and that the people laughed when they listened to us, and some spoke as if that were a great sin, we will make them laugh up yonder, I guarantee you, as we tell again the wonders of redeeming love and of the Grace of God—their mouths shall be filled with laughter and their tongues with singing! And then—   
*“Loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,   
While Heaven’s resounding mansionsring   
With shouts of Sovereign Grace”*and I expect each of you who love the Lord will do the same!   
I have no time for the other part of the sermon. You must come again to hear about THE PREPARED PEOPLE. But let me just say this to you—The place is prepared, are you prepared for it? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, your preparation has begun. Do you love the Lord and love His people? If so, your preparation is going on. Do you hate sin and do you pant after holiness? If so, your preparation is progressing. Are you nothing at all and is Jesus Christ your All-in-All? Then you are almost ready and may the Lord keep you in that condition and, before long, swing up the gates of pearl and let you into the prepared place!   
May the Lord bring us all safely there, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Joh 14:1-12***;** *Col 1:1-19***.**

**Joh 14:1**. Let not your heart be troubled. This is one of those verses that you may read as slowly as you like and spell out every letter and find honey in it all.

1. You believe in God, believe also in Me. As Jews, they had already known and seen the power of God. They were now to rise to the faith of Christians and to believe in Jesus their Savior. Even though they should see Him die, they were not to doubt Him. “You believe in God, believe also in Me.”

2. In My Father’s house are many mansions. So there is room for many. There are homes for many. There is wealth for many. “In My Father’s house are many mansions.”

2. It were not so, I would have told you. The Savior seems to say to His disciples, “I keep nothing back from you. Had there been some sorrowful fact to be revealed to you, I would at length have told you of it.”

2. I go to prepare a place for you. “There must be a Heaven, for I am going there, Myself, and I am going on purpose to make it ready for you.”  
3. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. That is the first and simplest idea of Heaven—to be with Christ—and I think it is the last and most sublime idea of Heaven, too! To be with Christ—“that where I am, there you may be also.”  
4, 5. And where I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way? The Apostles blundered and lost themselves in the words of their Master, instead of entering into the spirit of what He said. So we must not wonder if we often do the same. Unless we wait upon God to be instructed by His Spirit, even the most plain passages of Scripture may be obscure to us.  
6, 7. Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. And from henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him. Jesus had been talking about the many mansions and now He talks about the Father. Is the Father, then, the same as Heaven? Yes, indeed— to come to the Father is to come to perfect blessedness, to know the fullness of His eternal love and to enjoy it in face-to-face communion—this is Heaven! What higher bliss can we desire?  
8, 9. Philip said unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father, so how can you say, Show us the Father? Do we, then, see the Father when we see Christ? And is the Father’s Presence Heaven? Then Christ is Heaven and to be with Him is Heaven! It is even so. He is the way to Heaven, the truth of Heaven, the life of Heaven. He is Heaven’s everything— *“His track I see, and I’ll pursue  
The narrow way, till Him I view”—*  
and when I view Him, shall I not have seen the Father and have entered into the Father’s rest?  
10-12. Do you not believe I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me. He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto My Father. In consequence of Christ’s going to the Father and the Spirit of God descending upon Christ’s disciples, they are enabled to outdo their Master in some forms of holy service! For instance, some of them brought more to the faith than Christ Himself had done during His lifetime—and so realized the fulfillment of this promise—“The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto My Father.”  
**Col 1:1-14**. Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colosse: Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and brings forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in truth: as you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. As we read these words, we cannot help noticing how positively the Apostle speaks. There are no, “hope so,” “trust so,” “ifs” and, “buts.” It is all, “it is so” and, “it is so.” And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, concerning eternal matters, nothing but certainties will suffice for us. Allow uncertainties about your estates if you will, but we must have positive assurance concerning eternal things! And nothing short of this ought to content our spirits. Can we all say, as we listen to these words, “God has delivered us from the power of darkness; He has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins”?  
15. Who is the image of the invisible God. Admire this delightful passage in which the Apostle seems to burn and glow while he describes his Lord and Master, “who is the image of the invisible God.”  
15-19. The first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. Blessed be His glorious name! Amen.

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SPECIAL THANKSGIVING TO THE FATHER  
NO. 319

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 15, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness,**

**and has translated us into the kingdom  
of His dear Son.”***Col 1:12-13***.**

*THIS passage is a mine of riches. I can anticipate the difficulty in preaching and the regret in concluding we shall experience this evening because we are not able to dig out all the gold which lies in this precious vein. We lack the power to grasp and the time to expatiate upon that volume of truths which is here condensed into a few short sentences.*

*We are exhorted to “give thanks unto the Father.” This counsel is at once needful and salutary. I think, my Brethren, we scarcely need to be told to give thanks unto the Son. The remembrance of that bleeding body hanging upon the Cross is ever present to our faith. The nails and the spear, His griefs, the anguish of His soul and His sweat of agony make much tender touching appeals to our gratitude—these will prevent us always from ceasing our songs and sometimes fire our hearts with rekindling rapture in praise of the Man, Christ Jesus. Yes, we will bless You, dearest Lord. Our souls are all on fire. As we survey the wondrous Cross, we cannot but shout—*

**“O for this love let rocks and hills   
Their lasting silence break,   
And all harmonious human tongues   
The Savior’s praises speak.”**

*It is in a degree very much the same with the Holy Spirit. I think we are compelled to feel every day our dependence upon His constant influence. He abides with us as a present and personal Comforter and Counselor. We, therefore, do praise the Spirit of Grace, who has made our heart His temple and who works in us all that is gracious, virtuous and well-pleasing in the sight of God. If there is any one Person in the Trinity whom we are more apt to forget than another in our praises, it is God the Father.*

*In fact there are some who even get a wrong idea of Him, a slanderous idea of that God whose name is LOVE. They imagine that love dwelt in Christ, rather than in the Father and that our salvation is rather due to the Son and the Holy Spirit, than to our Father God. Let us not be of the number of the ignorant, but let us receive this Truth of God. We are as much indebted to the Father as to any other Person of the Sacred Three. He as much and as truly loves us as any of the adorable Three Persons. He is as truly worthy of our highest praise as either the Son or the Holy Spirit.*

*A remarkable fact, which we should always bear in mind, is this—in the Holy Scriptures most of the operations which are set down as being the works of the Spirit, are in other Scriptures ascribed to God the Father. Do we say it is God the Spirit that quickens the sinner who is dead in sin? It is true. But you will find in another passage it is said, “The Father quickens whom He will.” Do we say that the Spirit is the sanctifier and that the sanctification of the soul is worked by the Holy Spirit? You will find a passage in the opening of the Epistle of St. Jude, in which it is said, “Sanctified by God the Father.”*

*Now, how are we to account for this? I think it may be explained thus. God the Spirit comes from God the Father, and therefore whatever acts are performed by the Spirit are truly done by the Father, because He sends forth the Spirit. And again, the Spirit is often the instrument—though I say this not in any way to derogate from His glory—He is often the instrument with which the Father works. It is the Father who says to the dry bones, live. It is the Spirit who, going forth with the Divine Word, makes them live. The quickening is due as much to the Word as to the influence that went with the Word. And as the Word came with all the bounty of Free Grace and goodwill from the Father, the quickening is due to Him.*

*It is true that the seal on our hearts is the Holy Spirit. He is the seal, but it is the Eternal Father’s hand that stamps the seal. The Father communicates the Spirit to seal our adoption. The works of the Spirit are, many of them, I repeat it again, attributed to the Father, because He works in, through, and by the Spirit. The works of the Son of God, I ought to observe, are every one of them in intimate connection with the Father. If the Son comes into the world, it is because the Father sends Him. If the Son calls His people, it is because His Father gave this people into His hands. If the Son redeems the chosen race, is not the Son Himself, the Father’s gift? And does not God send His Son into the world that we may live through Him? So that the Father, the great Ancient of Days, is ever to be extolled. And we must never omit the full homage of our hearts to Him when we sing that sacred doxology—*

**“Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”**

*In order to excite your gratitude to God the Father tonight, I propose to dilate a little upon this passage, as God the Holy Spirit shall enable me. If you will look at the text, you will see two blessings in it. The first has regard to the future. It is a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. The second blessing, which must go with the first, for indeed it is the cause of the first, the effective cause, has relation to the past. Here we read of our deliverance from the power of darkness. Let us meditate a little upon each of these blessings and then, in the third place, I will endeavor to show the relation which exists between the two.*

***I.*** *The first blessing introduced to our notice is this—“God the Father has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is a PRESENT BLESSING. Not a mercy laid up for us in the Covenant, which we have not yet received—it is a blessing which every true Believer already has in his hand. Those mercies in the Covenant of which we have the earnest now while we wait for the full possession, are just as rich and just as certain as those which have been already with abundant loving kindness bestowed on us—but still they are not so precious in our enjoyment. The mercy we have in store and in hand is, after all, the main source of our present comfort.*

*And oh, what a blessing this! “Made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” The true Believer is fit for Heaven. He is meet to be a partaker of the inheritance—and that now, at this very moment. What does this mean? Does it mean that the Believer is perfect? That he is free from sin? No, my Brethren, where shall you ever find such perfection in this world? If no man can be a Believer but the perfect man, then what has the perfect man to believe? Could he not walk by sight? When he is perfect, he may cease to be a Believer. No, Brethren, it is not such perfection that is meant although perfection is* implied *and assuredly will be given as the result.*

*Far less does this mean that we have a right to eternal life from any doings of our own. We have a fitness for eternal life, a meetness for it, but we have no desert of it. We deserve nothing of God even now, in ourselves, but His eternal wrath and His infinite displeasure. What, then, does it mean? Why, it means just this—we are so far meet that we are accepted in the Beloved, adopted into the family and fitted by Divine approbation to dwell with the saints in light.*

*There is a woman chosen to be a bride. She is fitted to be married, fitted to enter into the honorable state and condition of matrimony. But at present she has not on the bridal garment, she is not like the bride adorned for her husband. You do not see her yet robed in her elegant attire, with her ornaments upon her—but you know she is fitted to be a bride, she is received and welcomed as such in the family of her destination.*

*So Christ has chosen His Church to be married to Him. She has not yet put on her bridal garment, beautiful array in which she shall stand before the Father’s Throne—but notwithstanding, there is such a fitness in her to be the bride of Christ. When she shall have bathed herself for a little while and lain for a little while in the bed of spices—there is such a fitness in her character, such a grace given adaptation in her to become the royal bride of her glorious Lord and to become a partaker of the enjoyments of bliss—that it may be said of the Church as a whole and of every member of it, that they are “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”*

*The Greek word, moreover, bears some such meaning as this though I cannot give the exact idiom. It is always difficult when a word is not used often. This word is only used twice that I am aware of, in the New Testament. The word may be employed for “suitable,” or, I think, “sufficient.” “He has made us meet”—sufficient—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” But I cannot give my idea without borrowing another figure. When a child is born, it is at once endowed with all the faculties of humanity. If those powers are wanting at first, they will not come afterwards. It has eyes, it has hands, it has feet and all its physical organs. These, of course, are as it were in embryo. The senses, though perfect at first, must be gradually developed and the understanding gradually matured. It can see but little, it cannot discern distances. It can hear, but it cannot hear distinctly enough at first to know from what direction the sound comes.*

*But you never find a new leg, a new arm, a new eye, or a new ear growing on that child. Each of these powers will expand and enlarge, but still there is the whole man there at first and the child is sufficient for a man. Let but God in His infinite providence cause it to feed and give it strength and increase, it has sufficient for manhood. It does not want either arm or leg, nose or ear. You cannot make it grow a new member. Nor does it require a near member, either. All are there.*

*In like manner, the moment a man is regenerated, there is every faculty in his new creation that there shall be, even when he gets to Heaven. It only needs to be developed and brought out—he will not have a new power. He will not have a new grace. He will have those which he had before, developed and brought out. Just as we are told by the careful observer, that in the acorn there is in embryo every root and every bough and every leaf of the future tree which only requires to be developed and brought out in their fullness.*

*So, in the true Believer, there is a sufficiency or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. All that he requires is. Not that a new thing should be implanted, but that that which God has put there in the moment of regeneration shall be cherished and nurtured—and made to grow and increase, till it comes unto perfection and he enters into “the inheritance of the saints in light.” This is, as near as I can give it to you, the exact meaning and literal interpretation of the text as I understand it.*

*But you may say to me, “In what sense is this meetness or fitness for eternal life the work of God the Father? Are we already made meet for Heaven? How is this the Father’s work?” Look at the text a moment and I will answer you in three ways.*

*What is Heaven? We read it is an inheritance. Who are fit for an inheritance? Sons. Who makes us sons? “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” A son is fitted for an inheritance. The moment the son is born he is fitted to be an heir. All that is wanted is that he shall grow up and be capable of possession. But he is fit for an inheritance at first. If he were not a son he could not inherit as an heir.*

*Now as soon as ever we become sons we are meet to inherit. There is in us an adaptation, a power and possibility for us to have an inheritance. This is the prerogative of the Father, to adopt us into his family and to “beget us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And do you not see that as adoption is really the meetness for inheritance, it is the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?”*

*Again—Heaven is an inheritance. But whose inheritance is it? It is an inheritance of the saints. It is not an inheritance of sinners, but of saints—that is, of the holy ones—of those who have been made saints by being sanctified. Turn then, to the Epistle of Jude and you will see at once who it is that is the Sanctified. You will observe the moment you fix your eye upon the passage that it is God the Father. In the first verse you read, “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father.” It is an inheritance for saints—and who are saints? The moment a man believes in Christ, he may know himself to have bean truly set apart in the Covenant decree. And he finds consecration, if I may so speak, verified in his own experience, for he has now become “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” separated from the rest of the world. And then it is manifest and made known that God has taken him to be His son forever.*

*The meetness which I must have, in order to enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light, is my becoming a son. God has made me and all Believers sons, therefore we are meet for the inheritance. So then that meetness has come from the Father. How meet, therefore, does the Father claim our gratitude, our adoration and our love!*

*You will, however, observe it is not merely said that Heaven is the inheritance of the saints, but that it is “the inheritance of the saints in light.” So the saints dwell in light—the light of knowledge, the light of purity, the light of joy, the light of love—pure ineffable love, the light of everything that is glorious and ennobling. There they dwell and if I am to appear meet for that inheritance, what evidence must I have? I must have light shining into my soul. But where can I get it? Do I not read that “every good   
gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down”—yes verily, but from whom? From the Spirit? No—“from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”*

*The preparation to enter into the inheritance in light is light. And light comes from the Father of lights. Therefore, my meetness, if I have light in myself, is the work of the Father and I must give Him praise. Do you see then, that as there are three words used here—“the inheritance of the saints in light,” so we have a threefold meetness? We are adopted and made sons. God has sanctified us and set us apart. And then, again, He has put light into our hearts. All this, I say, is the work of the Father and in this sense, we are “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”*

*A few general observations here. Brethren, I am persuaded that if an angel from Heaven were to come tonight and single out any one Believer from the crowd here assembled, there is not one Believer that is unfit to be taken to Heaven. You may not be ready to be taken to Heaven now. That is to say, if I foresaw that you were going to live, I would tell you, you were unfit to die, in a certain sense. But were you to die now in your pew, if you believe in Christ, you are fit for Heaven. You have a meetness even now which would take you there at once, without being committed to purgatory for a season. You are even now fit to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”*

*You have but to gasp out your last breath and you shall be in Heaven and there shall not be one spirit in Heaven more fit for Heaven than you, nor one soul more adapted for the place than you are. You shall be just as fitted for its element as those who are nearest to the eternal Throne.*

*Ah, this makes the heirs of glory think much of God the Father. When we reflect, my Brethren, upon our state by nature and how fit we are to be fire-brands in the flames of Hell—yet to think that we are this night, at this very moment, if Jehovah willed it, fit to sweep the golden harps with joyful fingers! That this head is fit this very night to wear the everlasting crown, that these loins are fit to be girded with that fair white robe throughout eternity, I say, this makes us think gratefully of God the Father. This makes us clap our hands with joy and say, “thanks be unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”*

*Do you not remember the penitent thief? It was but a few minutes before that he had been cursing Christ. I doubt not that he had joined with the other, for it is said, “They that were crucified with him reviled him.” Not one, but both. They did it. And then a gleam of supernatural glory lit up the face of Christ and the thief saw and believed. And Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto you, this day,” though the sun is setting, “this day shall you be with me in Paradise.” No long preparation required, no sweltering in purifying fires. And so shall it be with us.*

*We may have been in Christ Jesus to our own knowledge but three weeks, or we may have been in him for ten years, or threescore years and ten—the date of our conversion makes no difference in our meetness for Heaven, in a certain sense. True, indeed, the older we grow the more grace we have tasted, the riper we are becoming and the fitter to be housed in Heaven. But that is in another sense of the word—the Spirit’s meetness which He gives. But with regard to that meetness which the Father gives, I repeat, the blade of corn, the blade of gracious wheat that has just appeared above the surface of conviction, is as fit to be carried up to Heaven as the full-grown corn in the ear.*

*The sanctification wherewith we are sanctified by God the Father is not progressive—it is complete at once—we are* now *adapted for Heaven,* now *fitted for it and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord. Into this subject I might have entered more fully. But I have not time. I am sure I have left some knots untied and you must untie them, if you can, yourselves. And let me recommend you to untie them on your knees—the mysteries of the kingdom of God are studied much the best when you are in prayer.*

***II.*** *The second mercy is A MERCY THAT LOOKS BACK. We sometimes prefer the mercies that look forward, because they unfold such a bright prospect—*

**“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood.”**But here is a mercy that looks backward—turns its back, as it were, on the Heaven of our anticipation and looks back on the gloomy past and the dangers from which we have escaped.

Let us read the account of it—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This verse is an explanation of the preceding, as we shall have to show in a few minutes. But just now let us survey this mercy by itself. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, what a description have we here of what matter of men we used to be. We were under “the power of darkness.” Since I have been musing on this text, I have turned these words over and over in my mind—“the power of darkness”! It seems to me one of the most awful expressions that man ever attempted to expound. I think I could deliver a discourse from it, if God the Spirit helped me, which might make every bone in your body shake. “The power of darkness”!

We all know that there is a moral darkness which exercises its awful spell over the mind of the sinner. Where God is unacknowledged the mind is void of judgment. Where God is not worshipped the heart of man becomes a ruin. The chambers of that dilapidated heart are haunted by ghostly fears and degraded superstitions. The dark places of that reprobate mind are tenanted by vile lusts and noxious passions—like vermin and reptiles—from which in open daylight we turn with disgust. And even natural darkness is tremendous. In the solitary confinement which is practiced in some of our penitentiaries the very worst results would be produced if the treatment were prolonged.

If one of you were to be taken tonight and led into some dark cavern and left there, I can imagine that for a moment, not knowing your fate, you might feel a child-like kind of interest about it—there might be, perhaps, a laugh as you found yourselves in the dark. There might for the moment, from the novelty of the position, be some kind of curiosity excited. There might, perhaps, be a flush of silly joy. In a little time you might endeavor to compose yourself to sleep— possibly you might sleep. But if you should awake and still find yourself down deep in the bowels of earth, where never a ray of sun or candle light could reach you—do you know the next feeling that would come over you?

It would be a kind of idiotic thoughtlessness. You would find it impossible to control your desperate imagination. You heart would say, “O God I am alone, alone, alone, in this dark place.” How would you cast your eyeballs all around and never catching a gleam of light, your mind would begin to fail. Your next stage would be one of increasing terror. You would fancy that you saw something and then you would cry, “Ah, I would I could see something, were it foe or friend!”

You would feel the dark sides of your dungeon. You would begin to “scribble on the walls,” like David before king Achish. Agitation would cease hold upon you and if you were kept there much longer, delirium and death would be the consequence. We have heard of many who have been taken from the penitentiary to the lunatic asylum. And the lunacy is produced partly by the solitary confinement and partly by the darkness in which they are placed.

In a report lately written by the Chaplain of Newgate, there are some striking reflections upon the influence of darkness in a way of discipline. Its first effect is to shut the culprit up to his own reflections and make him realize his true position in the iron grasp of the outraged law. Methinks the man that has defied his keepers and come in there cursing and swearing, when he has found himself alone in darkness, where he cannot even hear the rattling of carriages along the streets and can see no light whatever, is presently cowed. He gives in, he grows tame. “The power of darkness” literally is something awful.

If I had time, I would enlarge upon this subject. We cannot properly describe what “the power of darkness” is, even in this world. The sinner is plunged into the darkness of his sins and he sees nothing, he knows nothing. Let him remain there a little longer and that joy of curiosity, that hectic joy which he now has in the path of sin, will die away and there will come over him a spirit of slumber. Sin will make him drowsy, so that he will not hear the voice of the ministry crying to him to escape for his life. Let him continue in it and it will by-and-by make him spiritually an idiot. He will become so in sin that common reason will be lost on him.

All the arguments that a sensible man will receive, will be only wasted on him. Let him go on and he will proceed from bad to worse, till he acquires the raving mania of a desperado in sin. And let death step in and the darkness will have produced its full effect—he will come into the delirious madness of Hell. Ah, it needs but the power of sin to make a man more truly hideous than human thought can realize, or language paint. Oh “the power of darkness”!

Now, my Brethren, all of us were under this power once. It is but a few months—a few weeks with some of you— since you were under the power of darkness and of sin. Some of you had only got as far as the curiosity of it—others had got as far as the sleepiness of it. A good many of you had got as far as the apathy of it. And I do not know but some of you had got almost to the terror of it. You had so cursed and swore—so yelled out your blasphemies—that you seemed to be ripening for Hell. But, praised and blessed be the name of the Father, He has “translated you from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

Having thus explained this term, “the power of darkness,” to show you what you were, let us take the next word, “and has translated us.” What an angular word this—“translated”—is. I dare say you think it means the process by which a word is interpreted, when the sense is retained, while the expression is rendered in another language. That is one meaning of the word “translation,” but it is not the meaning here. The word is used by Josephus in this sense—the taking away of a people who have been dwelling in a certain country and planting them in another place. This is called a translation.

We sometimes hear of a bishop being translated or removed from one see to another. Now, if you want to have the idea explained, give me your attention while I bring out an amazing instance of a great translation. The children of Israel were in Egypt under taskmasters that oppressed them very sorely and brought them into iron bondage. What did God do for these people? There were two millions of them. He did not temper the tyranny of the tyrant. He did not influence his mind, to give them a little more liberty. But He *translated* His people. He took the whole two millions bodily, with a high hand and outstretched arm and led them through the wilderness and translated them into the kingdom of Canaan. And there they were settled.

What an achievement was that, when, with their flocks and their herds and their little ones, the whole host of Israel went out of Egypt, crossed the Jordan and came into Canaan! My dear Brethren, the whole of it was not equal to the achievement of God’s powerful grace, when He brings *one poor sinner* out of the region of sin into the kingdom of holiness and peace. It was easier for God to bring Israel out of Egypt, to split the Red Sea, to make a highway through the pathless wilderness, to drop manna from Heaven, to send the whirlwind to drive out the kings—it was easier for Omnipotence to do all this—than to translate a man from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. This is the grandest achievement of Omnipotence.

The sustenance of the whole universe, I do believe, is even less than this—the changing of a bad heart, the subduing of an iron will. But thanks be unto the Father, He has done all that for you and for me. He has brought us out of darkness, He has translated us, taken up the old tree that has struck its roots ever so deep—taken it up, blessed be God, roots and all, and planted it in a goodly soil. He had to cut the top off, it is true—the high branches of our pride. But the tree has grown better in the near soil than it ever did before. Who ever heard of moving so huge a plant as a man who has grown fifty years old in sin? Oh, what wonders has our Father done for us!

He has taken the wild leopard of the wood, tamed it into a lamb and purged away its spots. He has regenerated the poor Ethiopian—oh, how black we were by nature—our blackness was more than skin deep. It went to the center of our hearts. But, blessed be His name, He has washed us white and is still carrying on the Divine operation and He will yet completely deliver us from every taint of sin and will finally bring us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Here, then, in the second mercy, we discern from what we were delivered and how we were delivered—God the Father has “translated” us.

But where are we now? Into what place is the Believer brought, when he is brought out of the power of darkness? He is brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Into what other kingdom would the Christian desire to be brought? Brethren, a republic may sound very well in theory, but in spiritual matters, the last thing we want is a republic. We want a *kingdom*. I love to have Christ an absolute monarch in the heart. I do not want to have a doubt about it. I want to give up all my liberty to Him, for I feel that I never shall be free till my self-control is all gone. That I shall never have my will truly free till it is bound in the golden fetters of His sweet love.

We are brought into a kingdom—He is Lord and Sovereign and He has made us “kings and priests unto our God,” and we shall reign with Him. The proof that we are in this kingdom must consist in our obedience to our King. Here, perhaps, we may raise many causes and questions, but surely we can say after all, though we have offended our King many times, yet our heart is loyal to Him. “Oh, You precious Jesus! We would obey You and yield submission to every one of Your laws. Our sins are not willful and beloved sins and though we fall, we can truly say that we would be holy as You are holy. Our heart is true towards Your statutes. Lord, help us to run in the way of Your commandments.”

So, you see, this mercy which God the Father has given to us, this second of these present mercies, is, that he has “translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This is the Father’s work. Shall we not love God the Father from this day forth? Will we not give Him thanks and sing our hymns to Him and exalt and triumph in His great name?

III. Upon the third point, I shall be as brief as possible. It is to SHOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO VERSES.   
When I get a passage of Scripture to meditate upon, I like, if I can, to see its drift, then I like to examine its various parts and see if I can understand each separate clause. And then I want to go back again and see what one clause has to do with another. I looked and looked again at this text and wondered what connection there could be between the two verses. “Giving thanks unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Well, that is right enough. We can see how this is the work of God the Father, to make us meet to go to Heaven.   
But has the next verse, the 13th, anything to do with our meetness?—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Well, I looked it over and I said I will read it in this way. I see the 12th verse tells me that the inheritance of Heaven is the inheritance of light. Is Heaven light? Then I can see my meetness, for it as described in the 13th verse—He has delivered me from the power of darkness. Is not that the same thing? If I am delivered from the power of darkness, is not that being made meet to dwell in light? If I am now brought out of darkness into light and am walking in the light, is not that the very meetness which is spoken of in the verse before?   
Then I read again. It says they are saints. Well, the saints are a people that obey the Son. Here is my meetness, then, in the 13th verse, where it says “He has translated me from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.” So that I not only have the light, but the sonship, too, for I am in “the kingdom of His dear Son.” But how about the inheritance? Is there anything about that in the 13th verse? It is an inheritance. Shall I find anything about a meetness for it there? Yes, I find that I am in the kingdom of His dear Son. How came Christ to have a kingdom? Why, by inheritance. Then it seems I am in His inheritance. And if I am in His inheritance here, then I am meet to be in it above, for I am in it already. I am even now part of it and partner of it, since I am in the kingdom which He inherits from His Father and therefore there is the meetness.   
I do not know whether I have put this plainly enough before you. If you will be kind enough to look at your Bible, I will just recapitulate. You see, Heaven is a place of light. When we are brought out of darkness, that, of course, is the meetness for light. It is a place for sons. When we are brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are, of course, made sons, so that there is the meetness for it. It is an inheritance. And when we are brought into the inherited kingdom of God’s dear Son, we enjoy the inheritance now and consequently are fitted to enjoy it forever.   
Having thus shown the connection between these verses, I propose now to close with a few general observations. I like so to expound the Scripture that we can draw some practical inferences from it. Of course the first inference is this— let us from this night forward never omit God the Father in our praises. I think I have said this already six times over in the sermon. Why I am repeating it so often is so that we may never forget it. Martin Luther said he preached upon justification by faith every day in the week and then the people would not understand.   
There are some Truths of God, I believe, that need to be said over and over again, either because our silly hearts will not receive, or our treacherous memories will not hold them. Sing, I beseech you, habitually, the praises of the Father in Heaven, as you do the praises of the Son hanging upon the Cross. Love as truly God, the ever-living God, as you love Jesus the God-man, the Savior who once died for you. That is the great inference.   
Yet another inference arises. Brothers and Sisters, are you conscious tonight that you are not now what you once were? Are you sure that the power of darkness does not now rest upon you, that you love Divine knowledge, that you are panting after heavenly joys? Are you sure that you have been “translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”? Then never be troubled about thoughts of death, because, come death whenever it may, you are meet to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Let no thought distress you about death’s coming to you at an unseasonable hour. Should it come tomorrow should it come now—if your faith is fixed on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness—you shall see the face of God with acceptance.   
I have that consciousness in my soul, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, of my adoption into the family of God. I feel that though I should never preach again, but should lay down my body and my charge together, before I should reach my home and rest in my bed, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” And more, that I should be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is not always that one feels that, but I would have you never rest satisfied till you do—till you know your meetness, till you are conscious of it—until, moreover, you are panting to be gone, because you feel that you have powers which never can be satisfied short of Heaven—powers which Heaven only can employ.  
One more reflection lingers behind. There are some of you here that cannot be thought by the utmost charity of judgment, to be “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Ah, if a wicked man should go to Heaven without being converted, Heaven would be no Heaven to him. Heaven is not adapted for sinners. It is not a place for them. If you were to take a Hottentot who has long dwelt at the equator up to where the Eskimos are dwelling and tell him that you would show him the aurora and all the glories of the North Pole, the poor wretch could not appreciate them. He would say, “It is not the element for me. It is not the place where I could rest happy!”   
And if you were to take, on the other hand, some dwarfish dweller in the north, down to the region where trees grow to a stupendous height and where the spices give their balmy odors to the gale and bid him live there under the torrid zone, he could enjoy nothing. He would say, “This is not the place for me, because it is not adapted to my nature.” Or if you were to take the vulture, that has never fed on anything but carrion and put it into the noblest dwelling you could make for it and feed it with the daintiest meals, it would not be happy because it is not the food that is adapted for it.   
And you, Sinner, you are nothing but a carrion vulture. Nothing makes you happy but sin. You do not want too much Psalm singing, do you? Sunday is a dull day to you. You like to get it over with. You do not care about your Bible. You would as soon there should be no Bible at all. You find that going to a meeting house or a Church is very dull work, indeed. Oh, then you will not be troubled with that in eternity—do not agitate yourself. If you love not God and die as you are, you shall go to your own company. You shall go to your jolly mates, you shall go to your good fellows. Those who have been your mates on earth shall be your mates forever. And you shall go to the Prince of those good fellows, unless you repent and be converted.   
Where God is you cannot come. It is not an element suited to you. As well place a bird at the bottom of the sea, or a fish in the air, as place an ungodly sinner in Heaven. What is to be done, then? You must have a new nature. I pray God to give it to you. Remember, if now you feel your need of a Savior, that is the beginning of the new nature. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Cast yourselves simply on Him, trust in nothing but His blood and then the new nature shall be expanded and you shall be made meet by the Holy Spirit’s operations to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.”   
There is many a man who has come into this House of Prayer, many a man is now present, who has come in here a rollicking fellow, fearing neither God nor devil. Many a man has come from the ale house up to this place. If he had died then, where would his soul have been? But the Lord that very night met him. There are trophies of that grace present here tonight. You can say, “Thanks be to the Father, who has brought us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”   
And if God has done that for some, why can He not do it for others? Why need you despair, O poor Sinner? If you are here tonight, the worst sinner out of Hell, remember, the gate of mercy stands wide open and Jesus bids you come. Conscious of your guilt, flee, flee to Him. Look to His Cross and you shall find pardon in His veins and life in His death.

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÷Col 1.13

DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS  
NO. 3366

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 29, 1866.

**“He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”** *Col 1:13***.**

DARKNESS is used in Scripture to express a great many things. Sometimes it represents sorrow. “A night of weeping” is a common expression among us. We speak, too, of, “walking in darkness and seeing no light.” We commonly say to one another that our minds are in a dark and gloomy state when we are surrounded by the fogs and mists of sorrow. Taking it in this sense, how often might we say of our heavenly Father, that, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness”? He has helped us in our temporal difficulties and circumstances, or He has whispered, “As your days so shall your strength be,” and He has turned our night of weeping into a morning of gladness, put away the sackcloth and ashes, and given us the oil of joy! Blessed be His name for all this! Let us not be ungrateful, nor forget the many times when He has turned our mourning into dancing and our sackcloth into scarlet and fine linen.

But darkness frequently signifies, too, in Scripture, ignorance. We were once so in darkness that we were blinded. “The God of this world” has blinded our eyes, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine in upon us! “We who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord.” Christ’s mission had for one of its many gracious purposes and ends the taking away of the darkness of human ignorance and the pouring of light upon the intellect of man. I thank God that many of us, though we know comparatively little, do know that whereas we were once blind, now we see! We do know something of ourselves so as to be humbled—and we know, too—something of the gracious God, so as to rejoice that we are saved by Him! God has, therefore, delivered us, in that sense, from the power of darkness. Let us be thankful for that. Pant for more knowledge, but oh, Believer, be grateful for what you have! Remember that the little you already know of saving Truth is inestimably precious, for to know Jesus Christ is eternal life! And if, on this side of the grave, you never learn any more, yet you know that which should set your tongue eternally in holy motion with a rapturous song of thankfulness to Him who has taught you such priceless Truth! Yes, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”

Darkness, too, frequently represents Satan and the mysterious spiritual influence which he exerts upon the human mind. He is called “the Prince of Darkness.” Darkness seems to be his element. God is the “Father of Lights,” but Satan seems to be the father of the gloom and the dark!

Two elements are now at war in this lower world—Christ, the Light, the true Light, and Satan—sin—thick darkness, a darkness which may be felt—the Egyptian darkness in which we are naturally born and out of which we are not delivered except by the supernatural power of God exhibited through the plan of salvation by His Grace! Beloved, we still are tempted by Satan, but we are not under his power! We have to fight with him, but we are not his slaves! He is not our king. He has no rights over us. We do not obey him—we will not listen to his temptations. By the Grace of God, we mean, notwithstanding all his opposition, to fight in his very teeth and to win our way to Heaven! He “has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Oh, what a mercy this is—that man, such a poor creature as he is, should be able to escape from the power of that master spirit Diabolus, Satan, the destroyer! That was a wonderful moment when, according to Bunyan’s description, Hopeful and Christian found that the key was turned in the lock and that they could get out of Giant Despair’s castle. That was a wonderful moment, I say, when, according to Master Bunyan, the key turned in the great lock which locked the iron gate. To use John Bunyan’s own words, he says, “That lock went damnable hard.” In all the new editions of “Pilgrim’s Progress,” it is put, “That lock went desperately hard.” That is the more refined way of putting it, but John Bunyan meant just what he said and implied that there was a sense of the wrath of God upon the soul of man on account of sin, so that he felt as if he were even near to Hell itself! And yet, at such a time, the key did turn in the lock and the iron gate was opened. You recollect that just at the moment, old Giant Despair woke up, and was going to pursue the pilgrims and lay hold upon them when he was seized with one of his fainting fits. Oh, what an escape from Giant Despair! And yet this is little compared with escaping from Satan! Satan is the prince of the power of the air—and human despair is but one of his servants, one of the black officers in his infernal regiment! To escape from Satan, himself! Oh, let it be sung in Heaven! Let angels who have never fallen help us to sing in triumph over those fallen spirits from whom we have been rescued by Divine Grace! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.”

I prefer tonight, however, as we cannot talk about all these things, and the field is so very wide, to consider the word, “darkness,” here, in the restricted meaning of sin. Sin is a tremendous moral and spiritual darkness which has spread over the human mind. But we are told in the text and we have felt it in our personal experience, that “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”

Let us speak, first, of the power of darkness from which we are delivered. Secondly, upon the statement here made concerning it. And thirdly, of the inferences which inevitably flow from the statement.

First, then, let us speak a little upon—  
I. THE POWER OF SIN FROM WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DELIVERED— as it is here set forth—under the suggestive image of “the power of darkness.”  
What is “the power” of darkness? I suppose everyone will admit that it is a power which tends towards slumber. It is a composing power. God has given us the night in which to sleep. Whether or not there is any absolute power in darkness to engender sleep, I do not know. But I do know this, that it is much easier, when reclining on your bed, to sleep in the dark than it is to sleep in the full glare of the sun. There seems to be some sedative influence about darkness, something which assists a man to fall into a state of inaction which we call, “sleep.” Now, Beloved, look upon the race of men. They are under the power of darkness and, in consequence, they sleep. Does not the Apostle say to us who are delivered from that power, “Let us not sleep as do others”? “They that sleep,” he says, “sleep in the night,” that being the proper time for sleep—the night with its raven wing seeming to engender sleep—“but let us that are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of love.” If you look abroad in the world, I say, you will see men under the soporific influence of sin given to slumber. Do you believe that men would go on to sin as they do if it were not that sin stupefies them, prevents their using their reason, drowns their conscience and will not permit them to judge accurately concerning things that differ? Why, can you imagine that a man would run the risk of everlasting misery for the sake of a few days of carnal delight if he were not, by some means or other, besotted and made a fool of by sin? Can you conceive that a man would hear the tidings of pardoning mercy through Jesus Christ and be solemnly assured that if he turned from the error of his ways, God would accept and receive him—and that then he would treat that message with levity and go his way, even to ridicule it, if it were not that sin has made him so unreasonable, even in these matters, and made him, if not an idiot, a madman, so that he will not think? He willfully chooses his own mischief, ruins himself and that with a sort of Satanic malice against himself as well as against God— choosing rather to inherit eternal misery than to give up the poor delights of time—choosing rather to feast upon the empty husks of this world than to come and sit down at the table of mercy and eat and drink of the Grace which God has provided! So, then, it is very clear— observation shows it to us and we also have felt it in ourselves—that sin has a soporific, a drowsing, a sleep-giving power! It makes men careless and indifferent. Makes them say, “I’ll chance it! I do not care what the future may bring!” It makes a man go right to the very edge of Hell with his eyes blindfolded and his heart like Nabal’s heart—which was turned to stone—careless even of the “terrors of the Lord” and of “the wrath to come”!  
But blessed be His holy name! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” I hope we do not sleep. “Oh, Christian! If you are careless, if you are asleep, if tonight your heart is heavy and dull, I should like to come and whisper this right into your soul, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” We are now to be active, earnest, zealous and full of devoted life! If they sleep who are unconverted, they only act according to nature. They are in the dark. They, therefore, sleep. What can they do otherwise? But you are in the Light of God, you know that you are saved, you rejoice in Jesus Christ! Oh, sleep not, my Brothers and Sisters, but seeing that there are but a few hours in your day, work while the day lasts and make it your pleasure and your delight to spend and to be spent in the service of Him! “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
A second power of darkness lies in concealment. It is the power of darkness to hide things. What a darkness we had last night! Trying to get home from ministering abroad, I thought I wou1d never be able to find my way. One could hardly see one’s hand in that dense fog which encompassed one. Houses and trees that one would have known in a moment and that would have told one where one was, were all concealed. One could see nothing! It would be a very small world, indeed, if it were no larger than what could then be seen. Darkness hides things. No matter how glorious yonder landscape may be as you stand upon the mountain’s brow—if the sun has gone down and if night has spread its wings over the whole, you can see nothing! It may be very well for the guide to tell you that yonder is a silver lake, and there the Black Forest, and that far away are the brows of mountains covered with their eternal snows, but you can see nothing—night has effectually blotted it all out! Now, the power of sin is just like that. It hides from the human mind what that mind ought to see. The man is lost, but he does not know it—he cannot see the rocks that are just ahead. The man has soon to stand before the bar of God and receive his sentence, but he does not know it. I mean his heart does not know it. He trifles on, caring for none of these things. As for the plague that is in him, in his ruined state, he does not believe it. He hears the Truth of God that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, but he is indifferent to it and as to the dear and precious things of the Covenant of Grace, he does not care for them. No matter how rich may be the mercy, nor how pure the consolation, he knows nothing at all about them, for he is in the dark! It is all dark, dark, dark with him amid the blaze of noon!  
I think I may honestly and humbly say that I do try to speak as plainly as any man can speak—and care nothing about mighty fine words—and yet I do not doubt but that scores come into this house and go out of it, saying, “Well, I do not understand it!” How could they? They are under the power of sin which makes the plainest truth perplexing and hides from their eyes that which the merest babe in Grace can plainly see!  
But, Beloved, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Now we can see, blessed be His name! The first sight we had so alarmed us that we almost wished we could not see! It was a sight so terrible, but when, afterwards, we looked to Jesus upon the Cross and found there was life for that look at the Crucified One—and when since then we have learned to look continually to Him and to find in His wounds our healing, and in His death our life—oh, I hope we are thanking God every moment of our existence that “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.” Now we can see in Him our Father, who was once to us, “the unknown God.”  
Now we can see in Jesus, to whom we were once strangers, our own dear Elder Brother. Now we can look at the river of death without being alarmed at it, for beyond it we can see the turrets and pinnacles of the new Jerusalem glittering with jasper and with carbuncle—and we are anticipating the happy day when we shall sing with the saints above! Sweet thought is it that with these eyes of ours, we shall see our Savior! Yes, He has delivered us from the concealing power of darkness!  
In the third place, darkness has a depressing and an afflicting power. Are you not all conscious, if you are shut up in a dark room, that your mind seems to sink in the dark? Why, our little children, who are the simplest specimens of humanity—and let us know the truth at once—can hardly be punished more severely (though I hope we never do so punish them, for it would be very wicked to do so) than by being shut up in the dark! They cannot bear it, cannot endure it and, at first, when the little one even goes to bed in the chamber alone in the dark, it feels afraid. What must not those persons have suffered who were shut up in the dungeons at Venice—dungeons below the watermark of the canal, where not a ray of light, perhaps, did ever come, except by the jailer’s candle— shut in there, hour after hour, unable to know the day from the night, but finding it one long and dreary night! The cruel oppressor would not have thought of it unless he had known that the darkness was so uncongenial to us that it depresses our spirits. Now, when some men have eyes given to them and can really see, sin is like darkness to them. Of course, it is not to some of you. A blind man sees as well in the dark as he does in the light, but as soon as ever you get eyes, God begins to deal with you till you feel that sin is a darkness to you! Oh, what a darkness is this! Well do some of us remember when we walked in the darkness of our sin. We tried to kindle a fire and to light ourselves with the sparks of our own good works, but we failed in every attempt and we would have been in the thick Egyptian night even now if it had not been that He delivered us from the power of darkness! Now, we know that we still, alas, sin, but it does not fill us with despair because there is an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous!  
Now, we come to our Father every night and, bowing low in reverence before Him, we mourn that we have sinned during another day, but we do not mourn with a hopeless sorrow, for we remember that— *“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.”*  
We know that when we were plunged into that fountain, our foulest stains were cleansed right away and now we give thanks unto the Father who has delivered us from the depressing power of sin! Oh, Christian, if you are downcast tonight about this, if you cannot say the text in this sense, go to your heavenly Father, pray to Him and ask Him to enable you to look to Christ just as you did at first! Perhaps you have too many good works of which to boast—and that is why you are so depressed. Throw them all away and come, now, as a poor, empty-handed sinner, having nothing to which to trust but the finished work of Christ! You may depend upon it, that doing this, your peace will yet be like a river because your righteousness, being Christ’s imparted to you, will be like the waves of the sea. Then shall you sing, “Thanks be to Him who has delivered us from the depressing power of darkness.”  
I cannot dwell upon these points, though they are all interesting, but must now notice, fourthly, that there is what I may call the fascinating power of darkness. It is strange, but it is true, that there are many who love darkness. I said just now that this was contrary to nature, and so it is in one sense. Unfallen nature could not bear darkness, but fallen nature loves it! Hear what God says about it, “Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” Night is the time of the world’s merriment. Then the thief steals out to do his deeds of evil. “They that are drunk, are drunk in the night,” and then is the time for “wantonness and chambering.” As the Apostle says, it is the hour of evil! Darkness seems to be attractive to some men. Strange is it, but it is so. The fascinating power of sin is just like the fascinating power of darkness. I have sometimes thought that sin might well be compared to those serpents which fascinate their prey. It may be some poor little animal—the snake looks and looks, and the little creature, instead of running away, looks at those bright, sparkling eyes till the poor hare, or rabbit, or whatever it may be, instead of escaping, stands as though it were a statue, perfectly tranquil and fascinated with the glare of the serpent’s eyes! And then in a moment the snake darts at it and devours its prey! So is it with sin and there are some here, perhaps, who are under its fascinating power tonight. They know, for they have often been told, that sin is their deadly enemy—and yet it is so pleasant, it is so enchanting, so enticing! As they picture the wizard as being able to strike men into stone, or able to make them do his will, so does sin seem to do and then, at last, it destroys the man who once found pleasure in it! It is a cupbearer to you and comes with smiling face, holds out the sparkling goblet and says, “Drink, my Lord! See the beaded bubbles sparkling on the rim! Drink! For it moves itself aright and sparkles. Drink! And it shall put a flush into your veins and make your blood tingle and leap and let you know a thrill and a joy you have never known before!” And when you get the cup to your lips, you may not be able to take it away again, though, as you drink, it will scald the lips and throat and burn the very vitals! And as you drink on, especially if you drink of the cup of lust, you shall feel another thrill that shall make the very bones rot, and the very marrow to decay till you wish you had never been born and curse bitterly the day in which you came into this world to be partaker of a poison so terrible, so loathsome, so like an ante-past of Hell! Oh my God! Grant that if there are any young men or women here who have already drunk of that cup, that by Your help they may dash it down once and forever! But it is fascinating, fearfully fascinating—and when once a person begins to drink of it, it is seldom that he stops until he drains the very dregs of eternal ruin! But thanks be unto God, for “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
It cannot fascinate us now. I know you, you fair witch! I know you, you painted harlot! Though you might have deceived me once, I know you now! My Savior has shown me superior charms. He has taught me the mischief that comes from loving the world and the things thereof— and now you tempt me in vain! I hope there are many here who can say, “He has delivered us from the fascinating power of sin, from the power of darkness.”  
I cannot stop on this point, however, but must notice

the fifth thing. There is about darkness an emboldening power to some men. Darkness makes the child afraid, but it makes the evil man bold! It is in the dark that the lion comes out after his prey and all the beasts of the field go forth to get their food. The sun would frighten them, but boldness comes to them with the darkness. And oh, there is a wonderfully emboldening power to some men in sin! Perhaps, my dear Friend, you have come in here tonight, but you have said this afternoon that which you would not have said 10 years ago! Ah, young woman, you have already done that which you would have shuddered to have done only 12 months ago! Ah, merchant, you have already entered into a doubtful transaction which you would have scorned some months back! You see, you did wrong by little, and as you did one wrong, you got courage to do another, and another, and another! There is the darkness of sin over your minds—you have grown more bold in sin, but that is a poor courage which depends upon the darkness—it is, in fact, the darkness of Satan! It is because of his supreme darkness of mind and spirit that Satan is the boldest of all spirits in contending with the God of Heaven and earth. Beware of the brow of brass! It is a grand thing for a Christian to be like a pillar of iron against evil, but it is a mark of reprobation to become like an iron pillar against God and against His Truth—and some men do become such. They sin until their sin engenders a second nature!  
At first, when sin catches us in its net, it is with the tiniest spider’s cobwebs that can scarcely be seen. And they seem as though you could break from them in a moment. Then they become silken bonds—then firmer, still, until a man seems to be enveloped in a tangle of cables—and every cable hardens and becomes as iron or triple steel until at last there is no escaping, for sin gathers daily force until it gets a monstrous power over men! Men will now say and laugh at a thing which once made them shudder! And do an action and then wipe their mouths and say, “Aha! Aha!” An action which once he would no more have thought of doing than trying to mount without wings above the skies! Hazael said, “Is your servant a dog that he should do this thing?” And yet, dog or not, he did the very thing he thought it impossible for him to do! Now, I trust if we have been delivered from the power of sin in this respect, that we are no longer to be found doing wrong—and that if we have done wrong, we are humbled on account of it. Then should we be contrite and broken in spirit—and instead of boasting, snapping our fingers, and saying, “It is nothing”—we should go to our beds ashamed, or go to our Father’s face blushing, mourning, weeping and saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” What a blessed thing it is to have a broken heart! Thank God for a tender conscience, and if you have one, never tamper with it. Oh, young man, never tamper with a tender conscience! It is such a blessing to have it. Oh, cultivate it, and pray the Lord to make your heart more and more tender concerning sin that you may hate it with a perfect hatred! He has delivered us from the power of sin.  
Once more, and I shall leave this point. Darkness seems to have about it a kind of prophetic power. If we were not warned by our astronomers when an eclipse was coming, I have no doubt that half the world would be dreadfully frightened as soon as the sun became darkened. People would say to one another, “The Judgment is coming.” That is their general thought. If the day gets unusually dark, they think something horrible is going to happen and they want to know whether this is not the time when the Judgment may be expected, and so on. Darkness seems to be a prognostication of evil. Such is sin. My dear Hearer, if you hear the voice of sin, it tells you in your sober moments—it cannot help telling you—that there is a judgment to come. “Be sure your sin will find you out.” “God will bring every work into judgment.” For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account at the Last Day. But the Christian knows that to him the darkness of sin prognosticates nothing of the kind! He stands beneath the Cross of Christ and he knows that sin spent itself upon Jesus upon that Cross so that it might not touch, for a single moment, the soul that believes in Jesus! Now, notwithstanding everything, the Christian can say, “I am forgiven. I am a monument of Grace. I am a sinner saved by blood! I rejoice that for me sin has been put away and I am, therefore, saved.” Thus, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness.”  
Now, I shall need your attention for a little upon the second Truth of God found here, which is—  
II. THE STATEMENT HERE MADE CONCERNING THE POWER OF DARKNESS.  
Observe that, in the first place, it is a statement full of assurance. “He has delivered us.” Paul does not say he hopes so, but definitely asserts, “He has delivered us.” Brothers and Sisters, can we speak in the same positive manner? Let us not be content unless we can, for if we have believed in Him, “He has delivered us.” If, indeed, our trust is in His finished work and perfect righteousness, then He has delivered us! It is not a matter of argument, or a thing about which to raise a debate—it is so—it must be so, for every soul that is in Christ, He has delivered from the power of darkness and translated into His own Kingdom!  
Observe, again, it is a statement full of intelligence. The person who uttered it knew what he was saying. He was a sound Divine, for he says, “He has delivered us.” He does not say, “We have got out of it somehow,” but, “He has delivered us.” I wish some persons could have much clearer notions than they have about who it is that saves. If salvation comes of man—well, say so! And if sinners save themselves by all manner of means, give them the credit, the glory, the praise of it! But if it is God who saves, then let Him have the sole and perfect honor for it! “Salvation is of the Lord.” Sinner, you should not try to save yourself! You cannot do it! If you could, why did Christ come to save you? Your salvation does not rest in your hands. “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” All the matter of salvation rests with the Eternal Father, through Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega of our salvation. The person who wrote this verse, then, it seems, was a sound Divine, for he ascribes the glory where it ought to be ascribed. “He has delivered us.”  
Then, next, it is a statement full of gratitude. If you look at the connection, you find it says, “Giving thanks unto the Father.” What a delightful Grace gratitude is! It is such a heavenly thing to be thankful. I wish we spent a little more time about it, being dissolved by God’s goodness, looking at all that He has done for us and at all our demerit, which renders that love the more wonderful! What joy is there in gratitude—to fall speechless at the foot of the Cross and feel the thanks we cannot speak, or to stand up and sing, “Blessed be His name,” or to tell others the loving kindness of the Lord and to say, “He has dealt graciously with me and He will deal graciously with me.” Brothers and Sisters, be much in the sacred and holy palace of gratitude! You cannot have anything that will more strengthen you for service than holy thankfulness to God for His favors. We might have said a good deal more upon that last point, but we leave you to say it to yourselves! And so we will close with the third Truth of God that shines here, namely—  
III. THE INFERENCES THAT MAY BE DRAWN FROM THIS STATEMENT.  
The first inference is a doctrinal one, but as I have already touched on this, I only briefly hint and then leave it. Here it is. Deliverance from the power of sin is as much the work of God as deliverance from the guilt of sin! Where we look for justification, there must we also look for sanctification, for as we are justified through Jesus Christ, we must also expect to receive sanctification from a heavenly source. We cannot receive the one blessing through the spirit and the other through the flesh. We would infer from the text, speaking doctrinally, that in order to our sanctification and our deliverance from the power of sin, we must look to our heavenly Father, altogether and alone.  
The next evidence is experimental. “He has delivered us.” Now, then, I ought to feel in my soul that I am so delivered—and if I do not so feel—I ought to be wretched until I do feel it because this has been the experience of every true Christian sooner or later. He has delivered us from the power! We may be in darkness sometimes, but it shall not have power over and enslave us. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Let the experimental inference then be, “I am resolved to be happy, yet I will—I will rejoice in God, for He has delivered.”  
The next inference is practical. If we are delivered from the power of darkness, do not let us put ourselves under its power again, and do not let us temporize with it. You would fancy, from the actions of some professors, that they were not delivered from the power of darkness at all, but were only helped to keep away from some conspicuous sin. When I hear some people talk about fox-hunting Christians, card-playing Christians, Christians who are never at Prayer Meeting, Christians who have no zeal for souls, it seems to me that they might just as well talk about angels who are not in Heaven, or angels who never obey the voice of God! Why, these are sham Christians! They are not genuine Christians—they are of the world and do the things of the world! We may conclude that their hearts and natures are worldly, for if they were spiritual, they would love spiritual things, and their hearts would be engaged in spiritual exercises. Brothers and Sisters, the Grace of God has not come into us merely to keep us away from some few notable vices, but to deliver us altogether from the power of darkness! And if I can sometimes go into sin—just occasionally by way of pleasure—it proves that I am a stranger to the deliverance which Jesus Christ gives to His really called and regenerated people!  
And now the last inference is a hopeful inference. If He has delivered us from the powers of darkness, He will deliver us all the way through! If He has done this great thing for us, what will He not do for us? If He has delivered us from the tremendous power of sin, He will certainly deliver us from the power of death! If sin is taken away, why need we fear? Has He delivered us from the power of darkness? Then He will certainly help us in our daily troubles. Did He give His own dear Son to put away our sin—and will He not give us bread and water? If He has covered our souls with the beautiful robe of righteousness that Christ has woven, will He let us lack for ordinary raiment? Oh, let us be of good cheer! The good God of Grace cannot be a bad God of Providence! He who feeds us so well on heavenly bread cannot starve us for lack of bodily bread! He has delivered us! We have already received the greatest mercy—and you may be quite sure of the smaller ones! When Sir Francis Drake was overtaken by a storm in the Thames off Greenwich, “What?” he said, “afraid of a storm? Been round the world three times and afraid, now, of being drowned in a ditch? No!” And surely we who have circumnavigated a whole world of discipline and trouble over whose heads the waves and billows have rolled, we do not mean to be drowned in this present trouble! Do you, my dear Friend? You shall not perish in this ditch! You shall get safely Home! He who has delivered you from the power of darkness will never withdraw His hand and help until He brings you within the pearly gates, puts the crown on your head, the palm branch in your hand, the snow-white robe on your shoulders and the new song of everlasting joy in your mouth, even praise forevermore! Be of good courage, then!  
And then there is this inference for some of you who are not converted. If God has delivered us, why should He not deliver you? Why, some of us who have been delivered seemed very unlikely to ever be delivered! We did not want to be! We loved darkness rather than light and yet He delivered us from it. We were, some of us, very hardhearted. Some of us had plunged very deep into sin. There are some here who are wonders of Divine Grace! They were once wonders of sin and yet the love of God looked them up and brought them out—fetched them from the bar of the gin palace, fetched them out of the theater, brought them even from the brothel, some of them, and washed and cleansed them and made them sit among God’s people, love His ways and rejoice in His dear name! And why should not God do the same with you? I know 20 reasons why He should not, but I will tell you one thing He has said, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” So if you come to Him, He will not cast out even you!  
The way to come to Him is to trust Him. That is, trust Christ to save you and it is all done, and you are saved! That is the great work. When a soul, sensible of sin, sees that Christ, by His blood, made atonement and comes and throws himself upon that Sacrifice of the Cross, then sin is pardoned! Then because the sin is pardoned, the forgiven sinner is grateful and he says, “I will not go on in this sin.” So he puts it away and he is led into a life of holiness by the mercy of God. Oh, that we could all say in the words of the text—and if we cannot all say it tonight, I hope we shall soon be able to do so—“Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and has delivered us from the Power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”

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÷Col 1.16

CHRIST THE CREATOR  
NO. 3180

A SERMON  
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**“All things were created by Him and for Him.”***Col 1:16***.**

THERE can be no mistake as to the Person concerning whom Paul is writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit—it is Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of God who was crucified on Calvary for, writing concerning the same Person in the 14th verse, the Apostle says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” It is, therefore, that Savior whose blood was shed for His people’s redemption who is here declared to be the Creator of all things and by whom all things consist!

The first verse of the Book of Genesis tells us that, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” so someone may ask, “How do you reconcile that statement with Paul’s declaration that all things were created by Christ and for Him?” No reconciliation is needed, for the two statements are identical, as Jesus is God, and “in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Jesus said, “I and My Father are One,” and so they are! We know not how it is, but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct Personalities, yet there are not three Gods, but only one, as the Apostle John writes, “There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One.” The one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the Father, Son and Spirit—Three in One and One in Three!

The subject I have to speak about is the honor and glory of the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! But it is so vast a theme that the preacher, at the outset, confesses that the task is too great for him to accomplish! He staggers beneath the weight of his theme which seems to him too great for the human mind to compass or for human lips adequately to express! All I can hope to do is to be lost in my subject that Jesus Christ may be All-in-All.

The text tells us that all things were created by Christ and for Him, so we will, first, consider Paul’s statement. And, secondly, we will review the rejections arising from it.

I. First, then, let us CONSIDER PAUL’S STATEMENT—“All things were created by Him and for Him.”  
So, first of all, Heaven, itself, was created by and for Christ Jesus. Then there is such a place, as well as such a state, and of that place Jesus is the center! There is such a place, for Enoch is there. “Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.” God took him bodily to some place—and that place is Heaven. Elijah is also there—the horses of fire and the chariots of fire took not merely his spirit, but the entire Elijah—and he is in Heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone back to Heaven, went there in His own body. When He passed into the skies, He went up into the heavenly places, as well as into the heavenly state—and there He lives at the right hand of God, even the Father, enthroned in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God—  
*“See how the Conqueror mounts aloft,  
And to His Father flies!  
With scars of honor in His flesh,  
And triumph in His eyes!  
There our exalted Savior reigns,  
And scatters blessings down—  
His Father well rewards His pains,  
And bids Him wear the crown.”*  
God, absolutely considered as a pure Spirit, needed no such place as Heaven. God is everywhere! Long ago He asked, “Do not I fill Heaven and earth?” The idea of there being needed any celestial court or place of abode falls short of the true idea of the Omnipresent Jehovah. Neither do I suppose that it would have been necessary to have a place for angels, for the holy spirits would have been able to behold the face of God everywhere—wherever they might be, there they would see God and, consequently, no special place would have been needed to be set apart for them! But it was ordained, in the eternal purpose of God, that there should be created a race of beings who should not be pure spirits, but who should have bodies made of material substances. And it was resolved by Jesus Christ that He would become one of these beings—that He would take upon Himself their nature and would become, in fact, a Man! Now, when a spirit becomes linked with a material substance, it must have a place in which to dwell and, therefore, Heaven was created both for Christ and for His people. When the Son of Man shall come in His Glory, He will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Prepared, that is, with this view—that there might be a special central place for the display of Christ’s Glory—and that all His people might be there with Him. These are His own words—“Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” They are not merely to be as He is, but to be with Him where He is and, therefore, Heaven was created by Him and for Him—and for His people who are vitally united with Him!  
O Beloved, when we get to Heaven, we shall see that everything there glows with the Glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! The print of His pierced hands will be upon everything. The city of pure gold was created by Him and created for Him. The foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones by Him and for Him. The jasper, sapphire, emerald, beryl and all the rest—and the gates of pearl are all for Him—all shall be to His glory! For Him each harp of gold, each palm of victory, each shout of victory, each song of adoration—all Heaven shall ring with the praises of Jesus! Heaven shall be, as it were, set with mirrors and every one of which you will be able to see a reflection of the glorious Person of Jesus Christ, even as in every dewdrop you may see the image of the sun. Everyone in Heaven will feel it to be his bliss to praise Jesus! Towards the august Throne of the Most High this anthem will triumphantly ascend, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!” And with the variation of which John tells us in the Revelation, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.”  
There will be nothing in Heaven that will be derogatory to Jesus, but everyone and everything there will be to His praise and glory! I cannot believe that any of His chosen people will be missing on the Last Great gathering Day. No David’s seat will be empty there! No Thomas will be absent then! I cannot conceive of one whom He has purchased with His precious blood being lost! Not one sheep or lamb will be missing from the great Shepherd’s flock in the day when they pass under the hand of Him that counts them—they shall all be there! The army of the Great Captain of our salvation shall be complete there! When the muster-roll is read, they shall all answer to their names—and all who are gathered there will owe their salvation to the Lamb who was slain! There will not be one Pharisee there to boast, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are.” There will not be one atheist there blasphemously shouting, “There is no God!” Nor one Unitarian seeking to drag Christ from the Throne that is rightly His—but all will be adoring and magnifying, and delighting to adore and magnify Him by whom and for whom Heaven itself was created—  
*“All the chosen of the Father,  
All for whom the Lamb was slain,  
All the Church appear together,  
Washed from every sinful stain!”*  
Next, all angels were created by Jesus and for Him. However great and strong, and swift they are, there is not one angel that ever flies from Jehovah’s Throne that was not created by Christ! Read the whole verse from which our text is taken—“For by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him.” If there are rank upon rank of blessed spirits, “that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word,” all were created by Him and for Him! Gabriel was sent to foretell Christ’s coming to earth. Angels announced His birth at Bethlehem. Others of them ministered to Him in the wilderness and in Gethsemane. They watched over His empty sepulcher and joyfully attended Him as He returned to Heaven as the victorious King of Glory! It is written that He was “seen of angels,” and it must have been with awe and wonder that they gazed upon Him from the manger to the tomb! We read, also, “which things the angels desire to look into”—and there must have been many mysteries which even their lofty intelligence could not comprehend until He explained it to them! They delight to praise and worship Him! And they help to swell the mighty chorus of adoring homage that is always ascending to Him—  
*“Bright angels, strike your loudest strings, Your sweetest voices raise!  
Let Heaven and all created things  
Sound our Immanuel’s praise!”*  
Angels were created by Christ and for Him—not merely to admire and adore Him, but actually to serve Him. Truly did the Psalmist write, “who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.” And Paul reveals a most important part of their service when he asks, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” We will not enter into any speculations about their battles with evil spirits on our behalf, though we believe that this is one of the many ways in which they minister for us. We cannot describe all the service that these heavenly messengers render to the Lord’s own people. I remind you of how one of them killed 185,000 of Sennacherib’s army in a single night! And of how the Prophet Elisha, besieged by the Syrians in Dothan, saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire for his protection. You will recall many other instances of angelic interposition and you know, too, how it is written, “He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. They shall bear You up in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone.”  
As for the fallen angels who rebelled against God and who have sunk forever into hopeless alienation from Him—even these were created by Christ and for Him! And though they hate Him, they shall be compelled to obey Him and to acknowledge that He is Lord over all! Even their malice against the people of God shall only draw out His love toward them and manifest His vigilance, wisdom and power on their behalf. In the wilderness the Son of Man met “the prince of the power of the air” in mortal conflict. Evil stood there endowed with all the attributes it could desire to have upon its side—evil ancient with long and varied experience, evil backed up by a powerful angelic intellect, evil with ferocious malice glaring in its eyes—evil with diabolic cunning tempting the Son of God to sin! There, too, stood the Prince of Life—alone, yet undaunted—the Incarnation of holiness and love! Three times they wrestled, foot to foot, but the tempter had to retire beaten. And when he came again, hoping to take the Son of God and Son of Man at a disadvantage in Gethsemane—when He was full of anguish and was shortly to die in still greater agony on the Cross—it was again a desperate struggle, but the Master flung him to the ground! Our Samson tore the old roaring lion as if he had been a kid, and left him prostrate and defeated, while He passed on to complete the great work of His people’s redemption and to conquer all the powers of darkness before He gave up the ghost! Glory be to Jesus! He has gotten Glory to Himself out of the devil and all his angels!  
And even Hell, itself, terrible as it is, was created by Christ as a necessary part of the moral government of the universe so that sin might not go unpunished. Even there Christ reigns! His Sovereignty is supreme down to its lowest depths. He has the keys of Hell and of death—and when the appointed time comes, He will send an angel with the key of the bottomless pit and bid him lay hold on “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan,” and bind him for a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit. And then, after the Millennium, and Satan has been again loosed for a little season, he shall be “cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are— and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Christ is King even over that dark sad part of His domains! And amidst all the confusion and tumult of the Pit, His enemies shall “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.”  
The verse from which our text is taken also reminds us that this world was created by Christ and for Christ. “By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth.” John tells us, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made.” The eternal Logos was the Creator of this lower world as well as of the realms on high! There is neither hill nor valley, sparkling fountain nor foaming sea which He has not made. “The sea is His and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land.” Truly is He the Creator of this earth! It was formed for Him as well as by Him!  
It was especially made to be the place of residence for His people, the place on which they would fall through sin and the place on which they would be restored through the redemption accomplished there by Christ Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. This world was created by Christ as the place where He, Himself, would live and labor—and suffer and die. He would be laid as a Baby in an earthly manger. As a Boy and a Man He would walk through the streets and lanes of this world! He would fare as human beings fared and suffer as the dwellers upon the earth suffered, though never through any sin of His own. I might truly say that the whole world was created for Calvary. “Why leap you, you high hills?” That little mound outside Jerusalem’s gate explains your very existence! The world itself was created that Christ might die on Calvary! This earth was to be a sort of stage upon which Christ was to take the principal part in the greatest drama that the whole universe has ever witnessed! The world was made by Him and for Him—and it will remain until His great purpose of love and mercy is fully accomplished!  
We must not forget that even the lower orders of Creation were made by Christ and for Him. They were needed by man—and man was necessary to the completeness of Christ’s plan of Salvation—so the lower forms of creatures are links in the chain that could not be spared. There is a wonderful sympathy between the various portions of Creation, as the Apostle Paul tells us, “for we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the

Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Treat all creatures kindly, then, as far as you can, for the great Creator’s sake. I would not have a sparrow needlessly killed, nor even a worm trod on that might be spared. My Lord and Master made them all—and when I look at them, I see traces of His wonderful wisdom and power! And when I see how bountifully He provides for them, I note the tokens of His goodness and care. He opens His hands and satisfies the desire of every living thing! There is not a little bird that picks up a seed by the roadside that was not created by Christ and for Him! And, perhaps, answers its end better than some of you who lift your brows to yonder Heaven only to defy your Maker! There is not an animal upon the common, nor a lion in the forest, nor a fish in the sea, nor a fowl in the air that was not made by Him—and that does not in some way promote His Glory!  
And to come to ourselves, men were created by Christ and for Him. Perhaps the Creator resolved to manifest His power and skill in a new order of created beings. He had made pure spirits and He had made material substances. He had created various forms of life rising from the vegetable to the animal. But He resolved that there should be a spirit created that would be affiliated with materialism and that this spirit should, in the end, when it had passed through all its graduations, become the most wonderful creature in the whole universe—a creature that should know evil, not merely by report, but by actual personal experience—a creature that would, after that, be delivered from the power of evil and so should be bound to God by ties of gratitude so strong that it would never revolt from Him again! This creature, knowing evil and knowing good, strengthened by Divine Grace, would, of its own free will, cling to the good and eschew the evil—and would forever be God’s best ally against all revolt in His dominions—for this creature, though it had known evil, was to become a child of God and to be a partaker of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. These creatures, partly spiritual and partly material, were to have at their head, Christ Jesus, who was to be the model of them all! And they were to be like He and to be His companions forever! But they were to be to Him more than companions—to be His friends with whom He might hold familiar conversation and to be to Him even more than friends—to be united to Him in personal relationship—to be so completely one with Him that they should be “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” that His life should be their life and that their life should be derived from Him!  
What a wonderful creature a man will be when He gets to Heaven with His body, soul and spirit all complete! No other creature will be so near to God as man will be through his union to the God-Man, Christ Jesus the Lord! Yet this glorified man will never presume upon his position, but will always keep his proper place. He will have been so trained and educated by his falls, his regeneration and his redemption that he will be always humble, and yet will rejoice that he is a son of the Most High who may say to Him, “Abba, Father.” I do not know how such a creature as a perfect man could have been made by God except through the fall in Eden, the birth of Christ at Bethlehem and His death on Calvary. In making man, God had produced a new type of being, that in him, Jesus Christ might find an opportunity of displaying His wondrous condescension in taking upon Himself man’s nature—and His wondrous Grace in taking upon Himself man’s sin and dying in his place! Through glorified men becoming Christ’s companions, friends and faithful servants by reason of His mysterious union with them, a new race of beings has been created who can have greater sympathy with God than any others of His creatures can have. Devils can have no sympathy with God, for they are only evil. The holy angels cannot have as much sympathy with God as man who has fallen by sin and then been saved by Divine Grace! It is of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, that it is written, “Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He who sits upon the Throne shall dwell among them.” He will be our God and we shall be His people! He will be our Father and we shall be His children forever and ever!  
But oh, if you reject the Savior! If you turn the wondrous opportunity of immortal glory which God presents to you in the Gospel, into the dread alternative of eternal wrath—if you are resolved that you will not be among those privileged beings who will be next to God, Himself. If you spurn the dignity that is held before you. Then, notwithstanding all that, you will have to glorify Christ! Even in this life and against your own will—you shall scarcely know how—you shall be made to subserve Christ’s purpose! And at the last He will make you realize how terrible He is as He breaks you in pieces as a potter’s vessel! If you will not touch His silver scepter of Mercy, you shall feel the weight of the iron rod of His inflexible Justice! If you will not lie at His feet as a penitent, you shall be driven from His Presence into the outer darkness where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever! God grant that none of you may ever know experimentally what this means!—  
**“You sinners, seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross  
And find salvation there!”**  
II. Now I must pass on briefly to REVIEW THE REFLECTIONS ARISING FROM THIS STATEMENT—“All things were created by Him and for Him.”  
And the first clear reflection from this declaration is, then, Jesus is God. If all things were made by Him and for Him, how is it possible for us to get away from the conviction that He is, indeed, God? I will not attempt to argue about the matter, but whatever others may say or do, as for me, Jesus of Nazareth is my Lord and my God—and I will love and adore, and worship Him forever and ever!  
The second reflection is that Jesus is the key of the universe—its center and its explanation. Creation and history are enigmas which can only be understood in the light of the Cross. When we look at the planets, their motions seem irregular from our standpoint. But if we could stand in the sun, we would see the planets revolving in their orbits in an orderly manner around it. Calvary is the sun of the universe! Stand there, believe in God making Propitiation for sin by the death of His Son, and you can understand everything in the light that streams from Calvary! Get away from that great center and you understand nothing. The great question to ask concerning everything is—Will it glorify Christ? How will it affect His infinitely wise designs?  
Try, beloved Friends, wherever you are, to see all things in the light of Christ. I think this will teach you not to look with scorn upon any of the things that are around you. See how the Lord Jesus has purged all things for His people so that they shall no longer be common or unclean. That lovely river, those fertile valleys, that dense forest, yonder snow-clad Alps and everything else that Christ has created, you need not say, as some have done, “I will not gaze upon the beauties of Nature, lest they should take my thoughts away from my Master.” Scorn not His works, lest you should also scorn the great Maker of them! His are the mountains. And the valleys are His—sun, moon and stars all shine to His praise and glory! Go up and down, then, in the world and be not troubled by many things that now disquiet you. Say, “I do not know how this will glorify Christ, but I am persuaded that in some mysterious way which I cannot yet fully comprehend, His eternal purposes are being accomplished.” See Christ in everything and see everything in the light of Christ!  
And, Beloved, another clear inference from Paul’s declaration is that to live to Christ is to live as we ought to live. If He made us for Himself, then we who live unto Him have found out the true purpose of our existence! Put a thing to a wrong purpose and it is a failure. But use it for the purpose for which it was made and it will answer that end. Christian, Christ made you for Himself! Yes, He has twice made you for Himself! Therefore lay yourself out for Him—body, soul and spirit—spend all your time, and all your strength, and all your means for Him and Him alone! So you will be in accord with the great purpose of your creation.  
If we do not live unto Christ, we have to make the sorrowful reflection that we are out of gear with all things that He has made. Although by the mysterious working of His Divine Power, He will get glory out of us, yet we are not consciously in harmony with Jesus and all discords must have an end. All opposition to Omnipotence must be futile and must also be transient. However long He may allow evil to continue, there is an end even to His long-suffering patience! And then, woe be to those who are still at enmity against the Almighty!  
Another reflection from the text is that we can only live for Christ as we live by Christ. We cannot glorify Him except as He gives us the Grace to do so—if we attempt to do it by our own power, we shall most certainly fail. Wait at His Cross, Beloved! Cry to Him to give you the aid of His almighty Spirit and then, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, you shall be able to live for Jesus, alone, by whom and for whom you were made both at your first creation and also when you were created anew in Christ Jesus!  
And, lastly, it is clear from all this that Christ must triumph. Some of us have been almost breaking our hearts as we look around at the follies of the generation in which we live. They are going on pilgrimages to the shrines of their idols—the gods that are not gods! They are bowing down to their priests and confessing in their ears the sad stories that should be told only to God! They are setting up the calves and images that their fathers worshipped and turning away from the only living and true God! All this we mourn and grieve over, but let us not imagine that Christ’s true Kingdom is suffering loss! Beneath the dark clouds that hide the sun, we mourn the absence of the great orb of day, but think how brightly the sun is shining above those clouds! Borrow an eagle’s wings and soar above the clouds, and then you shall see the sun shining in his strength. So is it with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness! Get away, by faith, from this poor earth, and you shall see Him shining in His Glory, whether it is day or night, summer or winter! Christ must reign. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.” But it is still true, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” And He shall reign forever and ever, and let all His people say, “Hallelujah!” And again and again cry, “Hallelujah!”  
He must reign. What power is there that can stand against Him who created all things? What arm can dare to be lifted up against His almighty arm? Be of good courage, you soldiers of the Cross! Dream not of defeat, nor think for a moment of fleeing from the foe in terror. Victory must come to the Lamb that was slain! He shall come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. His apparel shall be red, like the garments of him that treads in the wine vat, for all His enemies shall be trodden down in His wrath! And Rome, the harlot church, the chief of all His foes, shall be hurled down like a millstone into the flood and sink to rise no more—  
*“He shall reign from pole to pole  
With illimitable sway!  
He shall reign when, like a scroll,  
Yonder heavens have passed away!  
Then the end—beneath His rod,  
Man’s last enemy shall fall!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All-in-All.”*  
Happy is he who is the lowliest page in the retinue of such a King! Happy is he who shall be privileged to sprinkle a few drops of water to lay the dust in the road over which our conquering King shall ride! Blessed is he who shall spread his garments in the way, or wave a palm branch in honor of the royal Victor in His triumphal procession! Happy shall he be, then, who has been laughed to scorn for Christ’s sake! Or who has been lying in a dungeon till the moss has grown on his eyelids! Or who has been burned at the stake and his ashes cast to the four winds of Heaven because he would not deny his Lord! Oh to be wholly on His side, now, that we may be among His faithful followers on that Day! Here we are, O glorious Son of David! Take us and all that we have, and make us more than ever Yours from this time forward, and unto You shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

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

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Kindness is the very breath of Christianity, so the Apostle will not begin the subject matter of his letter until first of all he has breathed out a benediction upon those to whom he writes.

3. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. Paul very graciously blends his giving of thanks and his constant prayer for these Christians at Colosse and, therein, sets us an example that we may well imitate.

4-6. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which has come unto you, as it has, also, in all the world and is bringing forth fruit, as it has also among you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in truth. If there is a way of knowing the Grace of God which is of no value, it is when it is not known in truth, that is to say, when it is only head-knowledge, not heart-knowledge. But, oh, when in truth the Grace of God sinks into the soul and changes the whole nature, then it is an experience for which we may well give thanks to God!

7, 8. As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. Epaphras told them of Paul’s prayers for them and when he came back from Colosse, he told Paul of their great love in the Spirit.

9. For this cause we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. [See Sermon #1742, Volume

29—SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PRACTICAL RESULTS—Read/download the entire sermon,

free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See, the Apostle asks even more for them than faith, hope and love—that they “might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” This shows what a valuable thing it is to know and understand the will of God!

10, 11. That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. If we have faith, hope, and love, it is desirable that we add to these a fullness of knowledge—and to this holiness of life and fruitfulness of service—that we may have patience to endure the afflictions of this life and long-suffering with which to put up with the provocations of the ungodly.

12-14. Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. And now Paul, having mentioned his Master’s great work— redemption by blood and the forgiveness of sins—goes on a tangent, as it were. He is so enthusiastic with regard to Christ and His great atoning Sacrifice that the very thought of Christ’s blood stirs his own blood and he seems like a man all on fire with holy fervor as he writes—

15-17. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. How can anyone ever read this passage and yet say that Christ Jesus is only a Man? By what twisting of words can such language as this be applied to the most eminent Prophet or Apostle who ever lived? Surely He must be God by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist! But Paul’s next sentence is, to us, the sweetest of all—

18. And He is the head of the body, the Church. [See Sermon #839, Volume 14—  
THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at  
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He is joined by an indissoluble union to His people and is the Head of their glory, their wisdom and their strength!

18. Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. Are we giving Him the preeminence in all things? That theology must be false which puts Jesus in the second place, or even lower than that! And that experience is a wrong one which does not put Christ always in the front. He must in all things always stand first!

19. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. [See  
Sermons #978, Volume 17—ALL FULLNESS IN CHRIST and #1169, Volume 20—THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That we might have to go to Him for it, it pleased the Father to make errands for us so as to take us to Christ and to thus make our very emptiness to minister to the Glory of Christ!

20-23. And having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they are things in earth, or things in Heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight—if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast. This is a text that ought to be read and pondered every day by the many unstable professors who are in the Church at this present time— “if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast,” like a building that will have no further settling, no more splitting of the stones, no more cracking of the walls—because your foundation is secure and you are firmly built upon it!

23, 24. And are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister; who now rejoices in my sufferings for you. Oh how blessed it is when a man has so mastered himself that his sufferings for his fellow Christians become a matter of rejoicing for himself! He not only accepts them and bears them with patience, but he says—

24. And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the Church. There is nothing “behind” as to the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, but there is much yet to be endured in order that all the elect may be brought to Christ. Some must suffer through their extraordinary labors in preaching the Gospel, others through bearing reproach for the Truth of God’s sake— and Paul was glad to take in his mortal body, his share of the sufferings to be endured for the sake of Christ’s Church—which is His mystical body.

25-27. Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God, the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the

hope of glory. [See Sermon #1720, Volume 29—CHRIST IN YOU—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is the most blessed of all  
mysteries! I trust that many of us understand it—may the Holy Spirit reveal it to any who know it not!

28. Whom we preach. That is, Christ. It is not so much what we preach as whom we preach. We preach the Person of Christ—“whom we preach”—

28, 29. Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily. [See

Sermon #914, Volume 16—WORK IN US AND WORK BY US—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There will never be any mighty work come from us unless there is first a mighty work in us—no man truly labors for souls unless the Holy Spirit has first worked mightily in him.

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÷Col 1.18

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH  
NO. 839

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He is the head of the body, the church.”***Col 1:18***.**

As if to show us that this title of “Head of the Church” is to be held in highest esteem, it is here placed in connection with the loftiest honors of our Lord Jesus. In the same breath the Son of God is styled “the image of the invisible God,” “the first-born of every creature,” the Creator of all existence, and then, “the head of the body, the church.” We dare not, therefore, think slightly of this title, nor do we hesitate to assert that any levity with regard to it would be as disgraceful as the profane use of any other name of our Divine Lord. For any mortal to assume it to himself, we conceive would be equal in blasphemy to the assumption of the mediatorial office—and we should be no more shocked to hear a man claim to be “the Creator of all things,” than we are now when a mortal is designated, “Head of the Church.”

What is the Church? The word signifies an assembly. The Church of Jesus Christ is an assembly of faithful men, the whole company of God’s chosen, His called out ones, the entire community of true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever true Believers are, there is a part of the Church. Wherever such men are not, whatever organization may be in existence, there is no Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is no corporation of priests, or confederacy of unconverted men—it is the assembly of those whose names are written in Heaven. Any assembly of faithful men is a Church.

The aggregate of all these assemblies of faithful men make up the one Church which Jesus Christ has redeemed with His most precious blood, and of which HE is the sole and only Head. Part of that Church is in Heaven, triumphant! Part on earth, militant—but these differences of place make no division as to real unity. There is but one Church above, beneath. Time creates no separation—the Church is always one—one Church of the Apostles, one Church of the Reformers, one Church of the first century, one church of the latter days, and of this one, only Church, and Jesus Christ is the one only Head.

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY OUR LORD’S HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH? That shall be very briefly our first subject of thought. We understand this headship to be the representation of the Church as a body. We speak of counting heads, meaning thereby persons—the head represents the whole body. God has been pleased to deal with mankind as a community and His great Covenant transactions have been with men in a body—not with separate individuals. That is to say, at the first creation God did not so much deal with each particular person of the human race as with the whole race represented in one man, namely, the first Adam.

It was so ordained that the race should be bound up in his loins, to stand if he stood, to fall if he fell. Therefore, my Brethren, the Fall, hence original sin, hence the sorrows of this life. In order to salvation, which, perhaps, was only possible because we did not fall singly (for the devils falling singly and separately are reserved without hope of mercy unto everlasting fire), God instituted a second federation, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The Apostle calls Him the second Adam. He is the Head of that company of mankind who are His chosen—His redeemed who are known in this world by being led to believe in Him, and are ultimately gathered into His rest.

Now, Jesus Christ stands to His Church in the same position as Adam stood to his posterity. They are chosen in Him, accepted in Him and preserved in Him—“Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” As His own words declare it, “Because I live, you shall live also.” In the following chapters of the Epistle before us, the Apostle shows that the saints are buried with Jesus, risen with Him and quickened with Him. Even more explicit is he in the fifth of Romans, where the headship of Adam and of Jesus are compared and contrasted.

Our Lord is Head in a mystical sense, explained in Col 2:19 : “The Head, from which all the body by joints and hands having nourishment ministered, and knit together increases with the increase of God.” The head is to the body indispensable to life—it is the seat of mental life, the temple of the soul. Even so Jesus Christ is the vitalizing Head of all His people. “He is our life.” “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” The life of every member of the mystical body depends upon the life of the mystical Head. Through Jesus Christ every living child of God derives his spiritual life. Not one true member of the Church lives by a life of his own. “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Separation from Christ is spiritual death, “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.”

The head mystically is not merely the source of life and the seat of sensation, but it is the throne of supreme government. It is from the brain that the mandate is issued which uplifts the hand or bids it fall by the side. Man walks or speaks, or sleeps, or rises from his couch according to the dictate of that mysterious royal something which finds a place for itself within the head. Thus in the true Church of God, Jesus Christ is the great directing Head. From Him the only binding commands go forth. To Him all the really spiritual yield a cheerful homage. His members delight to do the will of their Head.

The whole fabric of the Church, actuated by His life and being filled with His Spirit, most readily concedes to Him that in all things He shall have the preeminence. In proportion as Christians are truly united to Jesus they are perfectly governed by Him, and it is only because of the old nature which abides in separation from Christ that Believers offend and transgress. In so far as they are spiritual men, so far does Jesus rule them as the Head governs all the members of the body. The Head is also the glory of the body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. The Divine image is best seen in the countenance—the face is the distinguishing glory of man.

Man holds his head erect—his countenance is not turned towards the earth like the beast—it glows with intelligence. It is the index of an immortal mind. Beauty chooses as her favored seat the features of the countenance. Majesty and tenderness, wisdom and love, courage and compassion here hang out their ensigns—all the Graces choose the head as their favored dwelling place. In this sense, right well is our Lord saluted as the “Head.” He is fairer than the children of men—Divine Grace is poured into His lips. In Jesus Christ all the beauty of the Church is summed up. What were His Church without Him? A carcass—a ghastly corpse bereft of all its glory—because divided from its Head.

What were all the good, and great, and excellent men who have ever lived without Christ? So many ciphers upon a writing table—they count for nothing until their Lord, as the great Unit—is put before them to give them power and value! Then, indeed, they swell to a mighty sum—but without Him they are less than nothing and vanity! An uncomely thing would be the Church of God if she were not comely with the comeliness which Jesus imparts to her! His head is as the most fine gold! His Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars! He is the chief among 10,000, and the altogether lovely—glorious is that body of which He is the crown and excellence! Well may the Church be called the fairest among women when her Head thus excels all the beauties of earth and Heaven!

Another figure which is used to describe the Headship of Christ to the Church is the conjugal. As the Lord made Eve out of the flesh of Adam, so has He taken the Church out of the side of Christ Jesus, and she is of Him as Eve was of Adam—she is of His flesh and of His bones. A mysterious union has been established between Christ and His Church which is constantly compared to that of marriage: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Savior of the body.” Jesus is the Bridegroom—His Church is His Bride. They are espoused, one to another. In bonds of love they are bound forever to each other and they are alike with sacred expectation waiting for the marriage day when shall be accomplished the eternal purpose of God and the desire of the Redeemer.

As the husband exercises a headship in the house—not at all (when the relationship is rightly carried out) tyrannical or magisterial, but a government founded upon the rule of nature and endorsed by the consent of love—even so Jesus Christ rules in His Church. Not as a despotic lord, compelling and constraining His subject bride against her will, but as a husband well-beloved, obtaining obedience voluntarily from the heart of the beloved one, being in all things so admired and had in esteem as to win an undisputed preeminence! Such conjugal headship is illustrated by the Word of God in the old prophecy, “You shall call Me Ishi, and shall call Me no more Baali.” Baali and Ishi both mean lord, but the sense differs. The one is a mere ruler, the other a beloved husband.

Jesus Christ’s kingdom is no tyranny! His scepter is not made of iron. He rules not with blows and curses and threats, but His scepter is of silver and His rule is love. The only chains He uses are the chains of His constraining Grace. His dominion is spiritual and extends over willing hearts who delight to bow before Him and to give Him the honor due unto His name. These, I think, are the senses in which this word, “headship,” is used. But there remains one other, these former all qualifying this last, upon which I intend to dwell at some length this morning. Christ is the Head of His Church as King in Zion. In the midst of the Church of God the supreme government is vested in the Person of Christ. “One is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren.”

The Church is the kingdom of God among men. It is purely spiritual— comprehending only spiritual men—and existing only for spiritual objects. And who is its King? None but Jesus! We can truly say, as they did of old who proclaimed the Kingship of the Crucified, “We have another King, one Jesus.” To Him the assemblies of the saints pay all regal honor and at His Throne the entire Church bows itself, saluting Him as Master and Lord. To no other do we render spiritual obeisance. Christ only and solely is King upon Zion’s hill, set there by eternal decree, maintained in that position by infinite power and appointed to remain upon the Throne till every enemy shall be made His footstool.

I wish I had eloquence, this morning, that I might bear worthy witness to the crown-rights of King Jesus in His Church! I know no subject which is more necessary to insist upon in these eventful times. Let Jesus be acknowledged as the only Head of the Church and the way out of the present political debate which agitates our nation is clear enough. Ignorance of this Truth of God blinds many! It makes them labor with all their heart for a bad cause, under the notion that they are doing God service. To know this Truth is to hold a most weighty trust with which we must not trifle.

Martyrs have bled for this Truth! Scotland’s heather has been stained in 10,000 places, and her waters have been dyed crimson for the defense of this weighty doctrine. Let us not be slow with unshaken courage to declare, yet again, that kings and princes and parliaments have no lawful jurisdiction over the Church of Jesus Christ! That it beseems not the best of monarchs to claim those royal prerogatives which God has given to His only begotten Son. Jesus alone is the Head of His spiritual kingdom, the Church!

And all others who come within her pale to exercise power are but usurpers and Antichrist—and not for one moment to be respected in their usurped authority by the true Church of the living God! Some Churches have not learned this lesson, but are held in leash like dogs by their masters. They crouch down at the feet of the State to eat the crumbs which fall from Mammon’s table! And if they are cuffed and beaten by the powers that be, well do they deserve it—and I would almost pray that the whip may fall upon them yet more heavily till they learn to appreciate liberty and are willing to take off the dog collar of the State and be free from human domination!

If they lose a little wealth they will win the solid gold of God’s own favor, and the abiding power of His Spirit, which they cannot expect to have while they are traitors to King Jesus and own not the sole and only Headship of Immanuel in the Church.

II. We shall now, therefore, in the second place, come to look a little into this Headship of Jesus Christ in a regal sense, as to WHAT IT IMPLIES. Since Christ is the Head of His body, the Church, He alone can determine doctrines for her. Nothing is to be received as Divinely warranted except it comes with His stamp upon it. It is nothing, my Brethren, to the faithful servant of Jesus Christ that a certain dogma comes down to him with the gray antiquity of the ages to make it venerable. Like a sensible man, the Christian respects antiquity, but like a loyal subject of his King, he does not so bow before antiquity as to let it become ruler in Zion instead of the living Christ!

A multitude of good men may meet together, and they may, in their judgment, propound a dogma and assert it to be essential and undoubted. And they may even threaten perils most abundant to those who receive not their verdict! But if the dogma was not authorized long before they decided it—if it were not written in the Bible—the decision of the learned council amounts to nothing! All the fathers, and doctors, and divines, and confessors put together cannot add a word to the faith once delivered unto the saints! Yes, I venture to say that the unanimous assent of all the saints in Heaven and earth would not suffice to make a single doctrine binding upon conscience unless Jesus had so determined!

In vain do men say, “So did the early Church”—the early Church has no supremacy over us! It is to no purpose to quote Origen or Augustine! Quote the Inspired Apostles and the doctrine is established, but not otherwise! In the Church of God it is never sufficient to say, “So thinks Martin Luther.” Who was Martin Luther? A servant of Jesus Christ and nothing more! It is not sufficient to say, “So teaches John Calvin,” for who is John Calvin? Has he shed his blood for you, or is he your master? His opinion is to be respected as the opinion of your fellow servant, but in no respect as a doctor or authoritative teacher in the Church—for Christ alone is Rabbi, and we are to call no man Master upon earth!

Suppose I have received a Truth of God from the very man who was the means of my conversion? I am bound, in candor and affection, to give all respect to him because of the relationship which exists between us. But I must take heed lest this declines into idolatry, and I, myself, become nothing more than a receiver of the Truth of God as the word of man, instead of accepting it as the Word of God. I am, therefore, in the most candid manner, but none the less solicitously, to bring to the test every Truth of God which I have received—whether from my father or mother, or my minister, or from some great man of olden times whose name I have learned to respect—seeking all the while light from above to direct me aright.

Nothing is doctrine to the Church of God—nothing which has not been taught in the Scriptures. To Christians it is nothing to say that certain doctrines are taught in books of common prayer, or of conference discipline, or of systematic theology. To us it is of small account that either Presbytery, or the Episcopacy, or Independency have put their stamp upon a certain form of teaching. Authority is no more to us than the snap of a man’s finger unless the Truth thus commended derives certainty from the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Head of His body the Church!

So next, since He is the Head, He only can legislate as to the Church. In a State, if any knot of persons should profess to make laws for the kingdom, they would be laughed at! And if they should for a moment attempt to enforce their own rules and regulations in defiance of the laws of the country, they would be amenable to punishment. Now the Church of God has no power whatever to make laws for herself, since she is not her own Head—and no one has any right to make laws for her, for no one is her Head but Christ. Christ alone is the Law-maker of the Church and no rule or regulation in the Christian Church stands for anything unless in its spirit, at least, it has the mind of Christ to support and back it up.

Such-and-such a thing has been thought to be right in the Church, and therefore it has been laid down and made prescriptive—the tradition of the fathers has established a certain custom. What then? Why this— that if we can distinctly see that the custom and prescription are not according to the tenor of Holy Scripture and the Spirit of Christ, neither of them are anything to us! But what if the custom is supported by all the good men of every age? I say that matters nothing if the Lord has not taught it! Our conscience is not to be bound! If a law were backed up by 50,000 times as many as all the saints it would have no authority upon the conscience even of the weakest Christian if not laid down by our King Himself! And the violation of such a commandment of men would be no sin but might, indeed, become a Christian duty in order to let men see that we are not the servants of men, but the servants of Jesus Christ the Lord!

In spiritual things it is of the utmost importance to keep this fact clear—that nonconformity is only sinful when it refuses to conform to the will of Christ—and conformity itself is a great sin when it obeys a rule which is not of the Lord’s ordaining! When we meet together in Church Meetings we cannot make laws for the Lord’s kingdom! We dare not attempt it! Such necessary regulations as may be made for carrying out our Lord’s commands—to meet for worship and to proclaim the Gospel—are commendable because they are acts necessary to obedience to His highest laws. But even these minor details are not tolerable if they clearly violate the spirit and mind of Jesus Christ.

He has given us spiritual guides rather than legal rubrics and fettering liturgies! And He has left us at liberty to follow the directions of His own free Spirit. But if we make a regulation, thinking it to be very wise—if it is contrary to the Spirit of our Lord—the rule is itself evil and is not to be borne with! In such a case the Church has trenched upon the rights of her Head, and has done what she ought not to have done. She has, in effect, snatched from His hand the scepter and set up a schism. Lawmaking in the Church was finished in that day when the curse was pronounced on him who should take from or add to the Word of God! Christ alone is the legislator of His Church—none but He!

But I go further and venture to say that Christ is not only the Legislator of the Church, and has left to us His Statute-book, sufficient to guide us in every dilemma, but He is also the living Administrator in the Church. He is not here, it is true, but as monarchs often administrate through lieutenants, so the Lord Jesus administers through His everliving Spirit who dwells in the hearts of His people. You are not to think of Christ as of One who is dead and buried. If He were here on earth I suppose nobody would claim to be the Head of the Church but Himself. His Presence would at once overawe every pretender—and now, though He is not here in Person—yet He is not dead!

He lives! He sits on the Throne prepared for Him at the right hand of the Father! In Spirit He is here. “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And what must the true Head of the Church think when He sees another put up into His Throne and impiously called by His title? What must the living Head moving in the midst of the Church feel in regard to such a blasphemous intrusion as that? He, the Holy Spirit, is the Vicegerent of Christ, the Representative of the absent Son of Man!

And how does this Spirit administer the Laws of God? I answer, through His people, for the Holy Spirit dwells in true Believers! And when they meet together as the Lord’s servants and humbly ask His guidance, they may expect to have it—and opening the Statute-Book and seeing plain directions as to their course of action, they may be quite sure that what they do has their Master’s sanction! If they look, first of all, for the direction in their Lord’s Law-Book and next seek to be instructed as to its meaning by the Holy Spirit—though they are many minds—they shall be led as one man to choose that course of action which shall be after the mind of Christ.

Acting humbly and obediently—not on their own authority but in the authority of Jesus Christ, who, by His Spirit still rules in His Church— Believers practically show Christ, still, to be the only Head of His Church as to actual administration as well as to legislation. The sole authority of Jesus Christ in all respects must be maintained rigorously, but Churches are very apt to be guided by something else. Some would have us guided by results. We have heard a discussion upon the question whether or not we should continue missionary operations, since there are so few converted! How can the question ever be raised while the Master’s orders run thus—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”?

Spoken by the mouth of Jesus, our Ruler, that command stands good, and the results of missions can have no effect upon loyal minds either one way or the other as to their prosecution! If from this day for the next 10,000 years not a single soul should be converted to God by foreign missions—if there still remained a Church of Christ, it would be her duty with increasing vigor to thrust her sons forward into the mission field because her duty is not measured by the result, but by the imperial authority of Christ!

Equally so the Church is not to be regulated by the times. We are told by some that this age requires a different kind of preaching from that of a hundred years ago—and that 200 years ago, in Puritan times, doctrines were suitable which are exploded now. We are told the minister must keep abreast of the age—this is a thoughtful and philosophic period and the preacher must therefore philosophize and bring forth his own thinking rather than “mere declamation”—which is the learned name for a plain declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! But, Sirs, it is not so! Our King is the same and the doctrines He has given us have not been changed by His authority, nor the rules He has laid down reversed by His proclamation!

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Let the times be polished or uncouth. Let them become philosophical or sink into barbarism—our duty is still the same, in solemn loyalty to Jesus Christ, to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! But the discoveries of science, we are told, have materially affected belief and therefore we should change our ways accordingly as philosophy changes. No, it must not be so! This is a stumbling stone and a rock of offense against which he who stumbles shall be broken. We still have the same King, still the same laws, still the same teaching of the Word—and we are to deliver this teaching after the same sort and in the same spirit!

Semper idem must be our motto—always the same, always keeping close to Jesus Christ and glorifying Him—for He and not the times, not the philosophy and not the wit of man must rule and govern the Church of God! If we shall do this, if any Church shall do this—namely, take its Truth from Jesus’ lips, live according to Jesus’ Word, and go forward in His name—such a Church cannot, by any possibility, fail, for the failure of such a Church would be the failure of the Master’s own authority! Brothers and Sisters, He has told us if we keep His commandments we shall abide in His love!

He will be with us always, even to the end of the world! And He has given to His Church His Holy Spirit according to the fullness of those words which He uttered when He breathed on His Apostles, “Whoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoever sins you retain, they are retained.” So then, a Church acting for Christ, with His authority denouncing the judgments of God upon sin, shall find those judgments follow. And opening the treasure house of God’s mercy to those who seek Jesus Christ by faith, those treasures shall be freely given according to the Church’s declaration, which she made in her Master’s name.

Go in her own name, and she fails! Go in her Lord’s name, and she succeeds! Take with her His sign manual. Walk in obedience to His Statute-Book, and deliver herself from the lordship of men—and the Church’s history shall be written in some such lines as these, “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” I have in these words, I am afraid, rather confusedly stated what I believe Scripture teaches with regard to the Headship of Christ, namely, that He is the only teacher of doctrine, the only maker of spiritual laws. That He is the living Administrator of the laws of His own spiritual kingdom and therefore no authority is to be yielded unto the Church but that of Christ—and when we have that authority, and are obedient to it—we need entertain no fear as to the result.

III. Thirdly, ON WHAT DOES THIS HEADSHIP REST? Very briefly, it rests on the natural supremacy of Christ’s Nature. Who could be Head but Jesus? He is a perfect Man, which we are not. He is the first-born among many Brethren, and we are but the younger and weaker. He is God over all, blessed forever and ever. Surely, none but He should be King in Zion since there is no part of the Church which is Divine except its glorious Head!

The headship of Christ is the inevitable and necessary result of His work. Hear how His members sing—  
*“You have redeemed our souls with blood, Have set the prisoners free.  
Have made us kings and priests to God,  
And we shall reign with You.”*

Who could be head but He to whom such praise can be awarded? He has washed us in His blood—He must be Head! He has loved us from before the foundation of the world—He must be Chief. His right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory—let Him be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords! That winepress in which He trod His enemies, till His garments were dyed with blood, was the guarantee to Him that He should sit on His Father’s Throne and reign forever and ever!

Moreover, the decree of God has decided this beyond dispute. Read the second Psalm and learn that when the kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, the Lord sitting in the heavens laughed at their conspiracy and scorned the gathering of His foes! “Yet,” says He, “have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” I will declare the decree—“The Lord has said unto Me, You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.” How gloriously the promise reads: “Ask of Me, and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron. You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” It is part of the eternal purpose which constituted the Church that Christ should be made its Head. And if there is a Church of the living God, it is also inevitable that of that Church Christ should be the sole Head.

Moreover, Brethren, and but once more—is not our Lord the Head of the Church by universal acclamation and consent of all the members of that Church? We have never set up a rival candidate! No heart renewed by His Grace can desire any other king!—

*“Let Him be crowned with majesty  
Who bowed His head to death!  
And be His honors sounded high  
By all things that have breath.”*

Rivals in His blood-bought dominion? Rivals against the Son of David?! Let them be swept away as the smoke! Let them be as driven stubble to His bow!

King Jesus! All hail! Long live the King! Bring forth the royal diadem! See you not how the angels crown Him? Hark you not to the songs of cherubim and seraphim, “For You are worthy, You are worthy to take the book, and loose the seven seals thereof”? Hear you not the everlasting chant of those who have overcome through His blood, “You are worthy, You are worthy, for You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood”? While the Church on earth joins in the same solemn canticle, “Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all, for worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

By the supremacy of His Nature. By the necessity of His accomplished work. By the decree of the Father. By the universal assent of all the bloodwashed, He is the only Head of His own Church!

IV. What then, Brethren, WHAT THEN, DOES THIS CONDEMN? What does it condemn? It condemns the villainous pretense of a Papal headship! A priest at Rome is the head of the Church of Jesus Christ, indeed! Well, if the Pope is head of the Church—if he is so—then see what, according to Scripture, he is. This Pio Nono is this—he is the head of the body, the Church “who is the beginning.” There was nothing, then, before this aforesaid Pius IX?

“The first-born from the dead”? Does he claim to have risen from the dead? “That in all things He might have the preeminence”—is this also the old Italian’s right? “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell”—blasphemy dares not apply this to the tottering prince whose treasury needs replenishing with Peter’s pence. Yet this is the description of the Person who is the Head of the Church, and, if Pius IX is not all that, he is no head of the Church! But perhaps he is the second head? ThenChrist’s Church is a monstrous being with two heads!

They may make it out to be three one day, perhaps, and then we will call the thing Cerberus, and Hell Dog, and we shall not be far off from the true idea of Popery. No, but he is the delegated head. What for? Why should Christ delegate authority which He can wield Himself? But we need a delegation, for Christ is absent. But the Holy Spirit is that delegation, and is here. Of all the dreams that ever deluded men, and probably of all blasphemies that ever were uttered, there has never been one which is more absurd and which is more fruitful in all manner of mischief than the idea that the Bishop of Rome can be the head of the Church of Jesus Christ!

No, these popes die, and are not! And how could the Church live if its head were dead? The true Head ever lives and the Church ever lives in Him! But it is affirmed that there must needs be a visible headship, and just now we are told every day that we must choose in church matters between the headship of the monarch of England and the headship of the pope at Rome. I beg the gentlemen’s pardon—we have no such choice, for when we are asked which we will have to rule us in spiritual things, we say, “Neither—neither for a single moment!” We make no bones about the matter, kings and queens are no heads of the Church to us.

We will no more brook spiritual domination from an English premier than from a Romish pope! We are equally opposed to both—all human headship must go down! To our well-beloved queen all honor and reverence as to one of the best of rulers in civil affairs. But in spiritual affairs in the Church of Christ she has no ruling power—what she may have in the Church of England is another question. To us it makes no matter whether it is man or woman—whether it is prince or priest—we will have neither czar, emperor, queen, pope, seraph or angel to reign in the Church of Jesus Christ!

The Church has no lawful governor or supreme Lord but Jesus Christ Himself. Our Lord, as it seems to me, puts this so plainly in the Word of God that I marvel men who believe in the Bible should think the State could be at the head of the Church! The State-Church party has placed a Bible with a crown and a scepter upon their posters! It is suggestive that the Bible is closed—for if Englishmen were once to read it, it would be fatal to the cause which now claims it—since one of the Truths of God they would read would be this—“My kingdom is not of this world.” And they would hear Christ say, “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s”—that is, yield all civil obedience to the civil authority, “but unto God the things that are God’s.”

Leave the Lord to rule in the kingdom of mind and spirit, and let Caesar keep his kingdom of civil government! Let the State do its work and never interfere with the Church! And let the Church do her work and never interfere with, or be interfered with, by the State! The two kingdoms are separate and distinct. Broad lines of demarcation are always drawn, throughout the whole of the New Testament, between the spiritual and the temporal power—and the mischief is when men cannot see this.

Christ is the Head of the Church, not anyone who represents the State. Brethren, just think for a minute what mischief this doctrine of the headship of the State has done. Time was when men could hardly be parish ushers without coming to take the Sacrament at the established Church. Oh, the multiplied hypocrisies which were perpetrated every day by graceless men who came to qualify themselves for office by taking the emblems of our holy faith when they knew not Christ! Such things are more or less inevitable to the system. Think, again, what persecutions have risen out of this error. You cannot put any sect into a position of ascendancy but it falls into persecution—all sects have persecuted, in turn, when so tempted.

There is not a pin to choose between one and the other, except, as I sometimes say, the Baptists have never persecuted because they have never had an opportunity. But I will not insist even upon that. It is in human nature to do ill when the civil arm is ready to crush conscience, and therefore Christ has taken the temptation out of the way and put it out of the possibility of His people, if they keep close to His rule, so much as to touch the carnal weapon. The weapons of their warfare, He tells them, are not carnal but spiritual and therefore mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. What a degradation to the Church of Christ to think of having any other Head but Christ!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if the monarch were the most holy and godly person that ever lived, I should tremble for him exceedingly that such a person should in any sense be styled the Head of the Church! How could such a person pray? How could a poor sinner—and such the best man still is—come before Christ and pray to Him and say, “Lord, You know I am the head of Your Church”? It seems to me to be such an atrocious claim, such a horrible profanity! I would not, for twice 10,000 worlds, touch that title with so much as the tip of my finger if I hoped to be saved! I dare not expose my friend, or even my enemy, to the awful risk he must make assuming such a title!

I judge no one, God forbid I should! But if I saw in this world a man absolutely perfect, full of Divine knowledge and light, and I were asked by him, “Shall I assume that title?” I should go down on my knees and say, “For God’s sake, and for your own soul’s sake, touch it not, for how can you, with your light, and knowledge and love to Christ, take from Him one of His grandest names?” But what shall I say when the monarch is the opposite? And such cases have occurred. I need not take you far back in history. The name of George IV has no remarkable odor of sanctity about it—and the same may be said of Charles II—I never heard historians say that he was eminent in godliness.

But yet these men were heads of the Church! I shudder at being compelled to remember such an infamous fact. Men, whose character is not to be thought of without a blush on the cheek of modesty, were heads of the Church of Jesus Christ! God have mercy on this land for having fallen so low as this, for I know not that heathen countries have ever blasphemed God more than we have done in allowing heartless debauchers to take upon themselves the name of “Head of the Church of Christ”! No, my Brethren, this cannot be endured by us in any Church with which we commune! We repudiate it! We shake off the abomination as Paul shook off the viper from his hand into the fire!

The same rebuke is due to that which has been tolerated in many Churches, namely, the headship of great religious teachers. Sometimes great teachers, while yet alive, have been practically regarded as the supreme arbiters of the Church. Their will was law, apart from the Book. Their decree stood fast, apart from the Scripture. All this was evil! There are certain Churches at this day which reverence extremely the names of dead men. “The Fathers”—are they not by some thought to be as great as the Apostles? The names of John Wesley, and John Calvin and others, I fear, very often occupy the place which belongs to Jesus Christ. Let every Church of Jesus Christ now declare that she follows not men but obeys her Master alone.

Mark you, Brothers and Sisters, the truth which I have brought out somewhat strongly equally applies to the Church itself, for the Church is not her own head—she has no right to act upon her own judgment apart from the statutes of her King! She must come to the Bible—everything is there for her. She has no right to use her own judgment apart from the Master. She must go to the Master. She is a servant and the Master is supreme. The Church’s power is twofold. It is a power to testify to the world what Christ has revealed. She is set as a witness and she must act as such. She has, next, a ministerial power by which she carries out the will of Christ, and does His bidding as Christ’s servant and minister.

A certain number of servants meet in the servants’ hall—they have an order given to do such work—and they have also orders given them how to do it. They then consult with each other as to the minor details—how they can best observe the Master’s rule and do His bidding. They are perfectly right in so doing. But suppose they began to consult about whether the objects proposed by the Master were good, or whether the rules which He had laid down might not be altered! They would at once become rebellious and be in danger of discharge. So a Church met together to consult how to carry out the Master’s will and how to enforce His laws does rightly.

But a Church meeting to make new laws, or a Church meeting to rule according to its own judgment and opinion—imagining that its decision will have weight—has made a mistake and placed itself in a false position. The one doctrine which I have sought to bring forward is this—that He, alone, who bought the Church, and saved the Church is to rule the Church.

V. But if so, WHAT IS THE LESSON WHICH IT TEACHES TO EACH ONE HERE? Does not it make each of you enquire, “If the entire Church is thus to yield obedience to Christ, and to no one else, am I yielding such obedience? I claim to be Christian, but am I a Christian of that prejudiced sort who follows that which they are brought up to, and so acknowledge the rules of mothers and fathers instead of the rule of Christ? Have I brought what I avow to be the Truth of God to the touchstone of Scripture? Did I ever spend a quarter of an hour in weighing my cherished opinions?” I am afraid the great mass of Christians have never done this— but have sucked in their religion with their mother’s milk and nothing further.

Again, if I am a Christian, am I in the habit of judging what I ought to do by my own whims and wishes, or do I judge by the Statute-Book of the King? Many say they do not like this and do not like that—as if that had anything to do with it! What are your likes and dislikes? You are a servant and bound to give up your will to the Master! If Christ gives a command which you imagine to be hard because it does not chime in with your love of ease—my Brothers and Sisters, will you not, as servants of the Master, put your whims aside and endeavor to follow Him? Oh, it is a blessed life to live—to be no longer the servant of men and of self—but to go to Christ daily in prayer, and say, “What I know not, teach me, Lord.”

Then you may laugh at Satan’s rage and face a frowning world, for the Master will never leave those who cleave to Him! If a man loves the testimonies and commandments of the Most High, God shall be his buckler, his shield, and his high tower. But if he turns aside to his own imaginings, his fall shall be certain! May the Lord keep the Church in this matter, and her day of victory shall soon come. May Christ be her only Head and her triumph draws near! I can see the morning breaking—yonder are the first streaks of light upon the sky—the Master is coming because the Church begins to acknowledge Him—and then shall her happy days begin and the days of her mourning shall be ended forever and ever.

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Sermon #1169 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Col 1.19

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS  
NO. 1169

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 19, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”** *Col 1:19***.  
“And of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.”** *Joh 1:16***.**

THESE two texts make up a very beautiful sketch of the plan of salvation. Put before your mind’s eye the sinner, empty of all holiness, of all hope, despairing and ready to die. Put, also, before your mind, God, full of mercy, willing to come and fill the sinner’s emptiness, to bring all His communicable attributes, dwell in that sinner and give him, first, the mercy which can blot out his sin, and then the holiness which can lift him up from his ruined condition. Next note the difficulty in the way—God cannot come as half a God—all His attributes must come together. And should the just God come into this guilty sinner to fill his emptiness, the flame of Justice would destroy him. It is not possible for God, even our God, who is “a consuming fire,” to come into contact with that which is sinful without destroying it. What then? Shall the sinner remain empty and shall God’s fullness remain uncommunicated?

Behold the plan which infinite Wisdom has devised! The Eternal Son of God becomes Man! The Divine Nature comes in all its fullness and dwells in the Mediator Christ Jesus! Coming into Him, He was made to feel the mighty burning of Justice, which caused Him agony but could not consume Him, for in Him there was no sin. Justice burned and blazed within Him and cast Him into a bloody sweat—yes, brought Him to the Cross and to death because He stood in the sinner’s place. But this golden Vessel, though heated, was not melted! It could contain the Divine fire and yet not be destroyed—and now in Christ Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and, moreover, the Divine Nature is in Him in such a way as to be capable of communication to the sons of men. Of course the essence of Deity is not communicated, for that would be to make men into Gods—but we are “made partakers of the Divine Nature” in the sense of receiving the same character—and becoming the children of God. That which God could not bring to us directly by reason of our inability to receive it, He has now brought to us through a Mediator, by placing it in the Man, Christ Jesus, that we, coming to Him, might freely receive of it.

The next step in the plan of salvation is this—that after the fullness of God has come to man in the Person of His Son, everyone that comes to Him by faith receives His Divine Grace. Salvation is not by what you bring to Christ, but by what you take from Him. You are to be receivers first, and then, by-and-by, through the power of Grace, you shall give forth

from yourselves rivers of living water to others. In your first coming you come empty, having nothing but your sin and misery—as empty, undeserving sinners you receive of His fullness—and all your life continue to do the same. The Grace already given is not the climax or the conclusion— you go on receiving more and more! Grace increases your capacity for Grace and that enlarged capacity becomes filled! And so the fullness of God comes into you till you are filled with it and you rise from Grace to Glory, being made like unto God and fitted to dwell where He is forever and ever.

Now, unconverted ones, take note that this is the plan of salvation, and the only plan. You must obtain God’s love and mercy and holiness by receiving it through the Mediator, Jesus Christ! You have not yet received it—I ask you, How long will you tarry without it? You are, in some degree, aware of your need, for you are not ignorant of the Gospel. Oftentimes you have heard the voice of its invitation and have been almost persuaded to receive the fullness revealed in Christ Jesus. How long will you waver between two opinions? How long will you hesitate? This is the way, the safe way, the suitable way, the only way which is open to you—and it is open to you at this very moment—will your feet never tread it? Will your disobedient steps forever wander, till, at last, you sink in despair and die eternally? God have mercy upon you and bring you to receive of the fullness which the Father has stored up in His Son, Jesus Christ!

Needy Sinners, I warn you, do not insult the fullness of Christ by thinking that you are full enough yourselves! Never think of putting your own righteousness side by side with the Divine, nor think of mixing your tears with Jesus’ blood, nor of bringing your prayers or your faith to increase the all-sufficiency of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice! He needs nothing from you! Come and take everything from Him, for all fullness dwells in Him. As you may not insult His fullness, so I pray you, do not neglect it. Do not stand by this Fountain and refuse to drink. Do not pass by the riches of His Grace as though they were nothing to you, lest haply, when you come to die, your heart should be wrung with terrible remorse because you have despised the Savior’s love. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Put not off these matters from month to month, but, “today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Hasten now unto the place where God Himself has come to meet you—namely, in the Person of His Son.

Moreover, as I charge you not to neglect the Grace of our Lord Jesus, so would I encourage you not to distrust it. All fullness dwells in Jesus—a fullness which is meant to be given out to all who receive it as the gift of Divine Grace! Believe in this fullness and, empty as you are, do not despair any longer when you remember that Jesus has a supply for every possible need. Come, though your head is bowed with grief, for Jesus never did reject a sinner and he never can. It is His office and calling to cleanse the guilty and to receive the lost. Come to Him, now, and may we, before this service is done, be able, all of us, to sing, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and, “of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.”

Let not these words be forgotten by those for whom they are meant. But still, I have not taken my text, this morning, with the view of so preaching from it. I have another aim altogether. Moreover, it will be right for me to say that I do not intend to go into an exposition of these texts, having explained them several times before. I have only taken them with one object, namely, to address myself vehemently to the servants of God— that they may be exhorted to lay hold of the fullness of the power and holiness which dwell in their Covenant Head.

During this last week I have given to my Brothers in the Conference, a motto which lay on my own heart. It is, “Forward! Upward!” These are the watchwords of this morning—Forward! Upward! I want you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to see that every preparation is made for greater growth and greater success. I want you to be encouraged to seize upon that which lies before you, but which is too often treated as if it did not exist, and to rise, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, to something higher than you have, up to now, accomplished or even attempted.

I. My first point this morning is this—THERE IS A GLORIOUS FULLNESS IN JESUS. Brothers and Sisters, if it is so, why are we so weak, unfurnished and unhappy? There is an infinite fullness in Jesus! A fullness of all that any saint can ever need to enable him to rise to the highest degree of Divine Grace. If there is anything lacking for the attainment of the Divine image in us, it is not a deficiency Christward—it is occasioned by shortcomings in ourselves. If sin is to be overcome, the conquering power dwells in Him in its fullness. If virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Christ to perfection. If I see before me an eminent child of God, whose conversation is in Heaven, I may not dare to say that I am not capable of being as sanctified as he is—for the same Lord is mine as well as his.

I have in my flesh no power whatever, for I am emptiness itself. In me the Truth of God is realized, “Without Me you can do nothing.” But, on the other hand, the power to do all things lies in Christ and the power to become fully consecrated streams forth from Him. “With God all things are possible.” “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” and they who dwell in Him shall find things impossible with man become simple everyday facts with themselves if they will but have faith in the mediatorial fullness.

Beloved, I am going to say nothing but what you all know. And I do not mean to garnish it with finery of words. The truth is that there are many who are barely Christians and have scarcely enough Grace to float them into Heaven. The keel of their vessel is grating on the gravel all the way. My prayer is that we may reach deep waters and have so much Grace that we may sail like a gallant ship on the broad ocean with a glorious cargo on board and all colors flying—and so there may be administered unto us an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Everything is provided for this. Christ has not merely placed enough bread on the table to keep us from starving, His oxen and fatlings are killed—He has spread a royal feast.

He has not provided a scanty garment which may barely hide your nakedness, but He has brought forth the best robe and has procured earrings for your ears, jewels for your necks and a royal crown for your

heads—for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell for all His saints. If you have not these riches, the fault lies with yourself. It is there—you might have it if you had but faith to take it. Too often we sit down like beggars on the dunghill and groan and cry because of the poverty of our nature when we ought to be rejoicing in the Lord. I thank God that we can groan, for that is something! But there is a more excellent way—a better gift to be earnestly coveted. In Christ you are rich to the fullness of riches! Get up, I pray you, to the high places and realize for yourselves the fullness of God in Christ Jesus!

The fullness which dwells in our Lord we may rest assured is sufficient for the conquest of the world. It is not enough for you or me that we should be wholly consecrated to Christ—our desire is that the whole world should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord! We can never be satisfied while there remains one sinner unsaved, one idol upon its pedestal, or one single error to darken the minds of men. For Christ we do not desire England, only, and the civilized nations, but we claim for Him the darkest dens of cannibalism and the vilest haunts of piracy. The banner of the Cross shall wave where now black flags poison the breeze! It shall be lifted high where today Kalee and Juggernaut set up their ensigns, for the Lord God Omnipotent shall reign from shore to shore!

We have in Christ Jesus all the might which is needed for subduing the nations, for all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. We have, dear Brothers and Sisters, I fear, too often been considering the amount of money and the number of men which would be needed. Indeed, I remember a remarkable paper being read explaining to us how much money it would require to evangelize the world—a calculation which I regarded as vanity of vanities and nothing more—for if mountains of money were put before us it might just as well be shoveled into the infernal deep for all the good it could do—if regarded as at all essential! Our checkbook needs more golden treasure and, thank God, we have it!

Depend upon it, when the Church is fit to be trusted with money, she will have it. Pecuniary straitness is only an index of lack of Divine Grace and is so far a good thing, because it brings before us in palpable form our real poverty before the Most High. But Brothers and Sisters, for the conquest of the world, the strength lies in the man Christ Jesus, since in Him all fullness dwells! And in Him we have all the necessary power at our disposal. We are never to say, “Those thieves and criminals are too depraved to be converted,” for in our Lord there is fullness of power to convert the most abandoned! We are not to say, “That alley in the darkest part of the city will never be cleansed from its abominations.” Jesus could cleanse Sodom, itself! We are never to leave a tribe of savages unevangelized because they are too degraded, nor are we to quail before an uneducated and subtle nation because it is too skeptical—all power for all cases is in Jesus—He is the armory of the house of David! In Him we shall find a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men! Let us go to the armory and we shall receive the invincible weapons of our Holy War, yes, and the strength with which to wield them—the might which ensures victory!

Beloved, the text puts away from us, as far as the east is from the west, every conceivable objection that may be raised as to what a saint can do, for surely the very thought of difficulty is rendered absurd by the fact of all fullness residing in our Lord on our behalf! It is not a fullness for merely teaching, but a fullness for convincing! It is not a fullness for simply convincing of sin, but for converting and bringing to full salvation! It is not a fullness for justifying the Believer, alone, but a fullness for sanctifying him—and not a fullness for sanctifying him merely for a little while—but a fullness to keep him to the end! It is a fullness which can fill him with all the fullness of God! Come to whatever place you may, you shall not say, “Here I am at a nonplus,” but there will you find a new illustration of the might of the eternal God which dwells in Christ Jesus!

The fact is, Beloved, we have a superabundant force in Christ and if we did but know it, instead of talking about the struggles of the Church and the strain that is put upon us to hold our own, the joy of the Lord would give such strength to us that we should not remember our own efforts, but like the flood which rushes down the mountain after the rain, the flush of life from Jesus would speed on with a tremendous force, leaping over every obstacle and filling our souls to the brim! God grant us to feel that we do not serve a little Christ nor a stingy Lord. Our God is the God of the hills as well as the valleys! And in the strength of the Lord Omnipotent we triumph in every place! Only let us serve God in real faith and we know not what we may live to see!

God grant us to know this first Truth of God that there is a fullness in Christ—and in the strength of that fullness we may cry—“Forward and upward!”

II. The next encouraging fact is that THE FULLNESS IS IN JESUS NOW. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” The glory of the past exercises a depressing influence upon many Christians. “We have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which You did in their day and in the old time before them.” But we dolefully complain that the golden age of Christianity is over—its heroic times are matter of history. Indeed, this feeling is transformed to fact, for scarcely any Church now existing realizes that it can do what its first promoters did! All appear to be quite sure that these are bad times and but little is to be done in them. We do not expect, nowadays, to find a Methodist so full of fire as the first field preachers. The Quakers are never as fanatical and even the Primitives are not Ranters now! The old reproach has ceased because the old ardor which provoked it has cooled down. So far so bad.

I see grave cause for sorrow in all this. A people are in an evil case when all their heroism is historical. We read the biographies of former worthies with great wonder and respect. But we do not attempt to follow in their steps with equal stride. Why not? It has pleased the Father that in Jesus all fullness should dwell, a fullness for Paul, a fullness for Luther, a fullness for Whitfield, and blessed be God, a fullness for me and a fullness for you! All that Jesus has given forth has not exhausted Him! Christianity has not lost its pristine strength—we have lost our faith—there’s the calamity! Oh, ignoble sons of glorious sires, you have degenerated, but not your Master! And if, even in your degeneracy, you would cast yourselves

upon your unchanging God, you would rise to more than the strength of your sires and do yet greater things than they!

The fullness of Jesus is not changed. Then why are our works so feebly done? Pentecost, is that to be a tradition? The reforming days, are these to be only memories? I see no reason why we should not have a greater Pentecost than Peter saw and a Reformation deeper in its foundations, and truer in its building up than all the reforms which Luther or Calvin achieved! We have the same Christ, remember that! The times are altered, but Jesus is the Eternal and time touches Him not. “But we are not such men as they.” What? Cannot God make us such? Are we weaker than they? The fitter to be instruments for the mighty God! Away with the cowardice which thinks the past is never to be outdone! Is not the Lord of Hosts with us? Is anything too hard for Him? We must labor to eclipse the past as the sunlight eclipses the brightness of the stars!

The mass of professors have their eyes only on the future. The good times are coming, by-and-by, but they are not here yet. We look forward with much hope to the golden age that is to be, when we shall see the fullness of Jesus and nations will be born in a day! Brothers and Sisters, does my text say, “It pleased the Father that in Him all fullness shall one day dwell”? No, but, “in Him should all fullness dwell.” Whatever has been done can be done now—and whatever shall yet be done, can be done today, by His Grace. Our laziness puts off the work of conquest. Our selfindulgence procrastinates. Our cowardice and lack of faith make us dote upon the millennium instead of hearing the Spirit’s voice today! Happy days would begin from this hour if the Church would but awake and put on her Strength, for in her Lord all fatness dwells.

When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? Some doubting ones say, “We do not wonder that there is success in such a place,” but we cannot have it. We hear of earnest ministers and we conclude that where they labor God will send the blessing, but not to our ministry. We conclude that when yonder woman gathers the young people around her, it is no wonder that blessing comes. Does Christ depend on ministers or on holy women? Have you said, “Alas, I cannot have the blessing.” Why not? How dare you limit the Holy One of Israel? You who dwell in towns where all is cold around you, do you despair? Is it in your minds that Christ is dependent upon the circumstances in which He has placed His servants? “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” What if the servants are empty—their Master is not! If the means of Grace lack power, Grace from above is still Omnipotent. Only fly to the Fountain and the dried up streams need not distress you.

Furthermore, our Churches believe that there is a great fullness in Christ and that sometimes they ought to enjoy it. The progress of Christianity is to be by tides which ebb and flow. There are to be revivals like the spring and these must alternate with long lethargies like the winter. O accursed Unbelief, will you always pervert the Truth of God? Will you never understand this Word of God—“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell”? It is not the Lord’s purpose that a fullness should reside in Jesus during revivals and then withdraw. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! The highest state of revival should be the normal condition of the Church. When her martyrs are most selfsacrificing, her missionaries most daring, her ministers most bold, her members most consecrated, she is, even then, below her standard—she has not fully reached her high calling—to come down from her position would be sin!

God grant us Grace to feel that we have not to drink of an intermittent spring, nor to work for Christ with an occasional industry—but as all fullness dwells in Him—it is ours to believe that today we can have all the blessing of a true revival! That today we can go forward in the power of God! That at this very hour we lack for nothing which can lift the Church into her highest condition of spirituality and power! God grant us to receive Grace for Grace today!

III. Thirdly, THE POSITION OF THIS FULLNESS IS RICHLY ENCOURAGING TO US IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING IT. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Brothers and Sisters, you have heard what we have said about the fullness—our words are very poor and poverty-stricken compared with the fact—but listen! The fullness is placed where you can receive it—where you can receive it now, for it is placed in Him who is your Brother—bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh! It dwells in Him who loves to give it, because, as our Head, He delights to communicate with His members!

The plenitude of Divine Grace dwells in Him who is, Himself, yours! Since He is yours, all that is in Christ is yours! You need not pray as if you had no inheritance in the blessing which you seek. Christ is the Trustee of the fullness of God and the property of it is vested in His people— you have only to ask of Him and He will give you that which is yours, already! Why do you hesitate? How can you linger? The Father has placed His Grace in Christ because it gratifies His love to His Son. It pleases the heart of the great God to see Jesus adorned with the fullness of Deity and every time Jesus gives to Believers, the great heart of God is gladdened! How can you hesitate about receiving it if it pleases God for you to partake in it? You may go with great spirit and comfort, since Jesus Himself is honored by your going to Him. He obtains Glory by distributing of His fullness to empty sinners, who, when they receive Grace, are sure to love Him—how can you think Him reluctant to bestow the gift which will increase His Glory?

Do you not know, too, that when you go to Christ, you gain even by the act of going? I am so thankful that Christ has not put my fullness in myself, for then I should not require to go to Him so often, or if I did go to Him I should not have an errand to go upon of such importance as to justify my seeking an audience. But now, every time I get to Christ’s door I can plead necessity. We go to Him because we must go. When is there an hour when a Believer does not need to receive from Jesus? Go, then, Beloved, since it blesses the Church, it honors Christ, it pleases God and it is the way of soul enrichment for yourselves! What place of resort could be so attractive as the Person of the Well-Beloved? If God had put His fullness into an angel, we should not feel greatly drawn to him—but since He has caused it to dwell in Jesus, He has put it where we love to have it— where we feel at home, where we are glad to go often! Yes, where we

would love to abide and never to go away, but to be forever receiving of Him.

I delight to think that this fullness is placed in Christ because He is the Man who receives sinners and, therefore, you saints who have lost your evidences, you Believers who have acted inconsistently and have not lived up to your privileges, you may say, “we cannot go for this fullness to God, Himself, but we will joyfully go to the Savior of sinners.” If you have been, till now, self-deceived, and your experience has all been a mistake, you can still come to the sinner’s Savior, to whom the thief looked up in his expiring hour—and from whom your first mercy came! Come, Brothers and Sisters, why do you hesitate? Why do you linger? You who know what Christ is, come, I pray you, with swift feet to the place where all you need is stored—and take all your heart requires! Yes, come for the highest degrees of Grace and for the largest measures of success—and you shall have them, for Christ delights to give exceeding abundantly above what we ask or even think!

IV. And now I have to pass on to another argument. I want to use each head as a hammer—and may God’s own Spirit wield it. The next is this, that FROM THIS FULLNESS WE HAVE, MANY OF US, ALREADY RECEIVED. Is not that an argument for still further exercising faith in Jesus? I know of no argument equal to that of practical experience. They must come who have come before! The sweetness of this honey remains upon the tongue and we long for more and cannot be satisfied till we have taken up the dripping honeycomb once again.

Now, see, Beloved, the text says, “Of His fullness we have all received.” That is, all the saints in former days have received of this fullness. There was not in John any good thing but what he received from his Master. There was not in the noble martyr Stephen one grain of courage but what he received from Christ. Paul, Apollos, or Cephas—these had nothing but what they took from Him If they received everything, why should we hesitate to do the same? Of ourselves it is also true that all our Graces came from Jesus. This is true of the greatest saint and true of the least. Do you remember when you first received Divine Grace? It brings to my mind right joyful memories of the hour when first these eyes looked to Him and were lightened—when I received pardon from His dying love and knew myself forgiven!

Since your conversion, dear Brothers and Sisters, everything good you have ever had, you have received from our Lord. What? Have you drunk out of your own cistern? What treasure have you found in your own fields? Nakedness, poverty, misery, death—these are the only possessions of Nature. But life, riches, fullness, joy—these are gifts of Divine Grace through Jesus Christ! Are you accepted before God? He justified you! Have you been kept? He has preserved you! Are you sanctified? He has cleansed you by His blood! Do you know, by full assurance, your interest in the Father’s love? He gave you that assurance! All you have and all you ever will have—all that every saint that shall ever be born shall have that is worth having comes out of the fullness of Christ!  
The crowded ranks of the white-robed above, without exception, confess, “Of His fullness we have all received.” I hear them sing, this morning, as they keep a glorious Sabbath Day above—and this is one sweet stanza of their song, “Of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.” Come then, Brothers and Sisters, what prevents us from receiving? “Ah,” you say, “I cannot imagine that I can be a Christian of the highest type.” Why not? Have you not received life? Why should you not receive life more abundantly? Have you not already been pardoned? Why should you not have the full assurance of that pardon? Have you not already been taken up from the horrible pit and out of the miry clay? What hinders but that Christ should set you upon a rock and put a new song into your mouth and establish your goings?

“But I cannot hope to be so useful as some are.” Why not? According to your faith so shall it be to you! God has given you one convert, why cannot He give you a hundred? You have been blessed to a dear child in Sunday school and you have rejoiced over that one jewel as a precious Godsend! Why should you not dive, again, and bring up other pearls for your Immanuel’s crown? I would stir in you a sacred ambition! I would provoke you to the highest style of Christian manhood and the most heroic form of Christian service! What you have received is the pledge of what you may receive, but, indeed, you have already obtained a good deal more than yet remains to be received!

Christ is yours and by that fact all things are yours! What you now need is included in what you already have! You only need to realize it—by faith call it your own—and practically to live upon it. May God enable you to do so! Of His fullness have we all received—why should we not receive more?

IV. The last blow of the hammer shall be this—THE GIFTS WE HAVE ALREADY HAD ARE NOT TRIFLES, for John says we have received “Grace for Grace,” which is a mode in the Greek language of expressing the superlative. We have received the highest Grace, superlative Grace. The gift of Jesus Christ is the highest Grace that even God, Himself, can bestow— nothing can go beyond that! Listen to this, then—“He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” I charge you, let that text enter into your hearts—and when you feel straitened in prayer and tempted to say, “No, not here, I cannot rise so high, I am not qualified for that attainment”— do, I pray you, remember the gifts already received by which Jesus opens your mouth and bids you ask great things.

The Father has given you His Son! How can He deny you anything? The expression, “Grace for Grace,” may mean Grace answering to Grace— Grace which was in accordance with Grace already given—Grace preparatory to what is yet to come. Has not the Father given you such Divine Grace as you had capacity to receive? If there had been more room you would have had more. If you had exercised more faith, He would have given you more joy. If you had possessed more hope, you would have had more realization. He has always come up to, and even gone beyond, the measure of our expectation. Is there, in your soul, this morning, an enlargement? I feel it in my own heart! I feel a dissatisfaction with my present attainments! I pant to know my Lord better! I am discontented with

what I have done for Him up to now! I long to do 10 times more for His Glory!

Do you feel the same? Oh, then He will keep in touch with you! Yes, He will do exceeding abundantly above all you ask, or even think! That text does not say, “Above what you can ask or think,” as people will persist in saying. That is not true because we can ask and can think as great things as God Himself will give, and He means us to ask before He gives. Our capacity for asking is, as a general rule, the measure of His giving, but the Scriptures say He will do exceeding abundantly above what you ask or think. Now, are you thinking great things and asking great things? Do not be afraid! The Lord will not let you outstrip Him! Be enlarged—and as large as your faith—so large shall the blessing be.

Then, dear Friends, Grace for Grace may mean Grace upon Grace, like Pelion upon Ossa—one mountain piled upon another—each Grace eclipsing the light of that which went before. This we have already known. When we first believed in Christ, pardon for sin seemed everything. But when we came to know that we were justified in Christ Jesus, that appeared to be a much greater blessing. And when we understood that we were adopted and were the sons of God, that new delight surpassed the former joy! The Lord has led you into Divine Grace which has surprised you and lifted you up from one point to another. I speak to many Brothers and Sisters here who must confess that their present state is very different from their Christian infancy—they now know what they never thought they could know. Why, there are doctrines that some of you can enjoy this morning which you used to think frightfully high doctrines! You once could not appreciate them, yet they are simplicities to you now! And there are conquests over sin which you could not have achieved in your boyhood. But now in your Christian manhood you can take up dragons and destroy them.

Now, dear Brethren, as you have been surprised with mercy, you are to be surprised with more mercy, and the Lord says to you, “Son of man, I will show you greater favors than these.” Greater joys are yet to be known! You have entered the room of silver—that inner door will lead you to a chamber of gold! And beyond that there is a door in the wall which he that is taught of God shall open—a door which will admit you into a chamber of diamonds! And when you shall come there and have seen the Glory and the exceeding riches of the Grace of God, there is still an inner chamber where that which eye has not seen nor ear heard shall be revealed to you—a joy unspeakable, unthinkable, indeed! May we comprehend with all the saints what are the heights and depths—and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. We have a fullness in Christ as Believers which we ought to use in the following manner —First, believe in great things! Do not sit down, as some do, in the little Meeting House where about 50 Brethren meet and expect the Lord to send a convert once every 12 months. And when He does send him, they worry him by the month together for fear he should not be one of the right sort! And when he finally comes in, they rejoice over him as one that finds great spoil in having picked up one solitary soul after 12 months’ ministry!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we have a greater God than this would imply! The little narrow thoughts which Christians have had as to the success of the Gospel cannot have come from a great God, can they? The day was when the very idea of sending the Gospel to the heathen was regarded by our orthodox Brethren as a piece of Don Quixotism, not to be attempted, and even now, if you say, “All the world for Jesus,” they open their eyes and say, “Ah, we are afraid you are tainted with universal redemption, or are going off to the Arminian camp.” God grant these dear Brethren new hearts and right spirits—at present their hearts are too small to bring Him much glory! May they get larger hearts, hearts something like their Lord’s—and may they have Grace given them to estimate the precious blood at a higher rate—for our Lord did not die to buy a few hundred souls, or to redeem to Himself a handful of people! He shed His blood for a number which no man can number—and His elect shall excel in multitude the sands which belt the sea!

Let us have great faith in what God intends to do. Believing these great things, let us expect them. Be on the qui vive for spiritual miracles. Expect to see hundreds converted! Wonder, when you hear a Gospel sermon, that the Holy Spirit does not save 3,000 by it! “Ah,” says one, “I should be very much astonished if He did.” I know you would, and that is why we do not see it! But we ought to wonder that there are not, and when we are as we should be, we shall see greater things than these! There is no weakness with God! That limping sinew is in Jacob’s thigh, it is not in the Angel’s. That palsied arm is man’s, not God's—no sinew of His arm can decay.

Sirs, do you think that He who smote the fields of Zoan with plagues is not Lord of idols and King of heathens? Do you think that He who divided the Red Sea cannot lead His people like a flock through the wilderness and bring them into the promised possession? Do you think that He cannot bring up His Church out of her bondage and set her feet in a large room? The Lord of Hosts is with us! Therefore let us expect things! Expecting great things, let us attempt great things! Let us each set about doing something for Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us try what can be done! Let us not, if we are Sunday school teachers, be satisfied with going through the day’s lesson and feeling, “There, that will do.” Aim at the immediate conversion of every child in the class!

Do not let us say, as we go round with the tracts this afternoon, “We will leave them and not say a word.” Aim at getting a word about Jesus Christ with every person you meet with! As for myself, the preacher, let me come here to preach to you, not with the hope that perhaps, here and there, one will find a Savior, but with an earnest cry to Heaven that the Holy Spirit will comprehend, in the lines of His electing and redeeming love, the whole mass of you, and make this Tabernacle into a golden casket in which all of us shall be the jewels, and take it right up and keep it in His bosom forever!

Last of all, let us not talk about this, but let us set about doing it! Shall we never have, in our midst, men who will go among the heathen to preach Jesus Christ? We had two lately, are there not two more? Young men and young women, will you not consecrate yourselves to the Lord

and go into exile for His sake? Have we none such? We have here, this morning, good women and good men, too, who are at work among the heathens of the east end of London and the worst parts of our city. Are there no others to do the same? There is room for scores of you to be as devoted to God as our dear Brother, Dr. Barnardo, or our Sister, Miss MacPherson—and why not you? Why should not the same anointing come upon you and qualify you for useful work?

Will you not, this very day, preach Christ in the streets? Will you not consecrate yourselves to be whole burnt offerings unto Christ, for Him to live, for Him to die? O soldiers of the Cross, will you loiter in the march? The enemy still holds citadels which belong to Christ and you, by a desperate push, may seize them! Swift as eagles and strong as lions, press onward and win the victory! Why do you hesitate? The powers of evil linger not! The hosts of Hell are raging—they call up all their strength against the Lord of Hosts—and will you stand back? Have you no courage? Is your blood turned to water? Has the Spirit of God departed from you?

Oh, let it not be so, but may God launch us upon the enemy like thunderbolts from His own Omnipotent hand! And yet may it be seen throughout the world that there are men who have received of the fullness of the Crucified One and who, therefore, can give it forth to others and point them to Him in whom the Father is well-pleased that all fullness shall dwell. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—***Joh 1:1-34***.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—436, 415, 249.  
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ALL FULLNESS IN CHRIST  
NO. 978

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 26, 1871,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”** *Col 1:19***.**

THE preacher is under no difficulties this morning as to the practical object to be aimed at in his discourse. Every subject should be considered with an object. Every discourse should have a definite spiritual aim, otherwise we do not so much preach as play at preaching. The connection plainly indicates what our drift should be. Read the words immediately preceding the text, and you find it declared that our Lord Jesus is in all things to have the pre-eminence. We would seem, by this text, to yield honor and glory to the ever-blessed Redeemer, and enthrone Him in the highest seat in our hearts.

O that we may all be in an adoring frame of mind, and may give Him the pre-eminence in our thoughts, beyond all things or persons in Heaven or earth. Blessed is he who can do or think the most to honor such a Lord as our Immanuel! The verse which succeeds the text shows us how we may best promote the glory of Christ, for since He came into this world that He might reconcile the things in Heaven and the things in earth to Himself, we shall best glorify Him by falling in with His great design of mercy. By seeking to bring sinners into a state of reconciliation with God, we are giving to the great Reconciler the pre-eminence.

Our Gospel shall be the Gospel of reconciliation on this occasion. May the reconciling word come home by the power of Christ’s Spirit to many, so that hundreds of souls may from this day forth glorify the great Ambassador who has made peace by the blood of His Cross. The text is a great deep, we cannot explore it, but we will voyage over its surface joyously, the Holy Spirit giving us a favorable wind. Here are plenteous provisions far exceeding those of Solomon, though at the sight of that royal profusion Sheba’s queen felt that there was no more spirit in her, and declared that the half had not been told to her.

It may give some sort of order to our thoughts if they fall under four heads. What is here spoken of—“all fullness.” Where is it placed—“in Him,” that is, in the Redeemer. We are told why, because, “it pleased the Father.” And we have also a note of time, or when, in the word, “dwell.” “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Those catch words, what, where, why, and when, may help you to remember the run of the sermon.

I. First, then, let us consider the subject before us, or WHAT—“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Two mighty words—“fullness,” a substantial, comprehensive, expressive word in itself—and “all,” a great little word including everything. When combined in the expression, “all fullness,” we have before us a superlative wealth of meaning. Blessed be God for those two words! Our hearts rejoice to think

that there is such a thing in the universe as “all fullness,” for in the most of mortal pursuits utter barrenness is found.

“Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.” Blessed be the Lord forever that He has provided a fullness for us, for in us, by nature, there is all emptiness and utter vanity. “In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.” In us there is a lack of all merit, an absence of all power to procure any, and even an absence of will to procure it if we could. In these respects human nature is a desert—empty, and void, and filled with waste—inhabited only by the dragon of sin, and bitter sorrow.

Sinner, Saint, to you both alike these words, “all fullness,” sound like a holy hymn. The accents are sweet as those of the angel-messenger when he sang, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy.” Are they not stray notes from celestial sonnets? “All fullness.” You, Sinner, are all emptiness and death. You, Saint, would be so if it were not for the “all fullness” of Christ of which you have received. Therefore, both to saint and sinner the words are full of hope. There is joy in these words to every soul conscious of its sad estate, and humbled before God. I will ring the silver bell again, “all fullness,” and another note charms us—it tells us that Christ is substance, and not shadow—fullness, and not foretaste.

This is good news for us, for nothing but realities will meet our case. Types may instruct, but they cannot actually save. The patterns of the things in the heavens are too weak to serve our turn. We need the heavenly things themselves. No bleeding bird nor slaughtered bullock, nor running stream, nor scarlet wool and hyssop, can take away our sins—

*“No outward forms can make me clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within.”*

Ceremonies under the old dispensation were precious because they set forth the realities yet to be revealed. But in Christ Jesus we deal with the realities themselves, and this is a happy circumstance for us. For both our sins and our sorrows are real, and only substantial mercies can counteract them. In Jesus we have the substance of all that the symbols set forth. He is our Sacrifice, our Altar, our Priest, our Incense, our Tabernacle, our All in All. The Law had “the shadow of good things to come,” but in Christ we have “the very image of the things” (Heb 10:1). What transport is this to those who so much feel their emptiness that they could not be comforted by the mere representation of a Truth, or the pattern of a Truth, or the symbol of a Truth, but must have the very substance itself!

“The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ” (Joh 1:17). I must return to the words of the text again, for I perceive more honey dropping from the honeycomb. “All fullness” is a wide, far-reaching, all-comprehending term, and in its abundant store it offers another source of delight. What joy these words give to us when we remember that our vast necessities demand a fullness, yes, “all fullness,” before they can be supplied! A little help will be of no use to us, for we are altogether without strength. A limited measure of mercy will only mock our misery.

A low degree of Divine Grace will never be enough to bring us to Heaven, defiled as we are with sin, beset with dangers, encompassed with infirmities, assailed by temptations, molested with afflictions, and all the while bearing about with us “the body of this death.” But “all fullness,” yes, that will suit us! Here is exactly what our desperate estate demands for its recovery. Had the Savior only put out His finger to help our exertions, or had He only stretched out His hand to perform a measure of salvation’s work—while He left us to complete it—our soul had forever dwelt in darkness.

In these words, “all fullness,” we hear the echo of His death-cry, “It is finished.” We are to bring nothing, but to find all in Him. Yes, the fullness of all in Him—we are simply to receive out of His fullness Grace for Grace. We are not asked to contribute, nor required to make up deficiencies, for there are none to make up—all, ALL is laid up in Christ! All that we shall want between this place and Heaven, all we could need between the gates of Hell—where we lay in our blood—to the gates of Heaven, where we shall find welcome admission, is treasured up for us in the Lord Christ Jesus—

*“Great God, the treasures of Your love  
Are everlasting mines,  
Deep as our helpless miseries are,  
And boundless as our sins.”*

Did I not say well that the two words before us are a noble hymn? Let them, I pray you, lodge in your souls for many days. They will be blessed guests. Let these two wafers, made with honey, lie under your tongue. Let them satisfy your souls, for they are heavenly bread. The more you bemoan your emptiness the sweeter these words will be. The more you feel that you must draw largely upon the bank of Heaven, the more will you rejoice that your drafts will never diminish the boundless store—for still will it retain the name and the quality of “*all fullness*.”

The expression used here denotes that there is in Jesus Christ the fullness of the Godhead. As it is written, “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” When John saw the Son of Man in Patmos, the marks of Deity were on Him. “His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow”—here was His eternity! “His eyes were as a flame of fire”—here was His Omniscience! “Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword”—here was the Omnipotence of His Word! “And His countenance was as the sun shines in his strength”—here was His unapproachable and infinite Glory!

He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Nothing is too hard for Him. Power, wisdom, truth, immutability, and all the attributes of God are in Him and constitute a fullness inconceivable and inexhaustible. The most enlarged intellect must necessarily fail to compass the personal fullness of Christ as God— therefore we do no more than quote again that noble text—“In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him.”

Fullness, moreover, dwells in our Lord not only intrinsically from His nature, but as the result of His mediatorial world. He achieved, by suffering, as well as possessed by nature, a wondrous fullness. He carried on His shoulders the load of our sin. He expiated, by His death, our guilt, and now He has merit with the Father—infinite, inconceivable, a fullness of desert. The Father has stored up in Christ Jesus, as in a reservoir for the use of all His people, His eternal love and His unbounded Grace, that it may come to us through Christ Jesus, and that we may glorify Him. All power is put into His hands—and life, and light, and Grace, are to the full at His disposal.

“He shuts and no man opens, He opens and no man shuts.” He has received gifts for men, yes, for the righteous also. Not only as the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father is He the possessor of Heaven and earth, and therefore filled with all fullness, but seeing that as the Mediator He has finished our redemption, “He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Glory be to His name for this double fullness!

Turn the thought around again, and remember that all fullness dwells in Christ *towards God and towards men*. All fullness towards *God* and—I mean all that God requires of man. All that contents and delights the eternal mind so that once again, with complacency, He may look down on His creature and pronounce him, “very good.” The Lord looked for grapes in His vineyard, and it brought forth wild grapes. But now, in Christ Jesus, the great Farmer beholds the true vine which brings forth much fruit.

The Creator required obedience, and He beholds in Christ Jesus the Servant who has never failed to do the Master’s will. Justice demanded that the Law should be kept, and, lo, Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Seeing that we had broken the Law, justice required the endurance of the righteous penalty, and Jesus has borne it to the full, for He bowed His head to death—even the death of the Cross. When God made man a little lower than the angels, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life—and so made him immortal—He had a right to expect singular service from so favored a being—a service perfect, joyful, continuous. And our Savior has rendered unto the Father that which perfectly contents Him.

For He cries, “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” God is more glorified in the Person of His Son than He would have been by an unfallen world. There shines out through the entire universe a display of infinite mercy, justice, and wisdom such as neither the majesty of Nature nor the excellence of Providence could have revealed. His work, in God’s esteem, is honorable and precious. For His righteousness sake, God is well pleased. The Eternal mind is satisfied with the Redeemer’s Person, work, and sacrifice. For “unto the Son, He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows” ([Heb 1:8-9](tw://bible.*?id=58.1.8|_AUTODETECT_|)).

What unspeakable consolations arise from this Truth, for, dear Brethren, if we had to render to God something by which we should be accepted, we should be always in jeopardy. But now, since we are “accepted in the Beloved,” we are safe beyond all hazard. And were we to find we should appear before the Most High God, we might still be asking, “Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?”

But now hear the voice which says, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offering for sin You would not, nor had pleasure in them.” We hear the same Divine voice add, “Lo, I come to do Your will,” and we rejoice as we receive the witness of the Spirit, saying, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all,” for from now on is it said, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever.” The all-fullness of Christ is also *man-ward*, and that in respect of both the sinner and the saint. There is a fullness in Christ Jesus which the seeking sinner should behold with joyfulness.

What do you want, Sinner? You want all things, and Christ is All. You want power to believe in Him—He gives power to the faint. You want repentance—He was exalted on high to give repentance as well as remission of sin. You want a new heart—the Covenant runs thus, “A new heart, also, will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them.” You want pardon—behold His streaming wounds wash you and you are clean. You want healing—He is “the Lord that heals you.” You want clothing—His righteousness shall become your clothes.

You want preservation—you shall be preserved in Him. You want life, and He has said, “Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life.” He is come that we might have life. You want—but indeed, the catalog is much too long for us to read it through at this present time. But be assured though you pile up your necessities till they rise like Alps before you, yet the All-Sufficient Savior can remove all your needs. You may confidently sing—

***“You, O Christ, are all I want,  
More than all in You I find.”***

This is true, also, of the saint as well as the sinner. O Child of God, you are now saved, but your wants are not, therefore, removed. Are they not as continuous as your heartbeats? When are we not in want, my Brethren? The more alive we are to God, the more are we aware of our spiritual necessities. He who is, “blind and naked,” thinks himself to be “rich and increased in goods”—but let the mind be truly enlightened, by God’s Grace—and we feel that we are completely dependent upon the charity of God. Let us be glad, then, as we learn that there is no necessity in our spirit but what is abundantly provided for in the all-fullness of Jesus Christ.

You seek for a higher platform of spiritual attainments. You aim to conquer sin. You desire to be plentiful in praises unto His Glory. You are longing to be useful, you are anxious to subdue the hearts of others unto Christ. Behold the necessary Grace for all this. In the sacred armory of the Son of David behold your battle-ax and your weapons of war. In the stores of Him who is greater than Aaron see the robes in which to fulfill your priesthood. In the wounds of Jesus behold the power with which you may become a living sacrifice. If you would glow like a seraph, and serve like an Apostle, behold the Grace awaiting you in Jesus!

If you would go from strength to strength, climbing the loftiest summits of holiness, behold Grace upon Grace prepared for you! If you are perplexed, it will not be in Christ. If there is any boundary to your holy attainments it is set by yourself. The infinite God Himself gives Himself to you in the Person of His dear Son, and He says to you, “All things are yours.” “The Lord is the portion of your inheritance and of your cup.” Infinity is ours. He who gave us His own Son has in that very deed given us all things. Has He not said, “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it”?

Let me remark that this is not only true of saints on earth, but it is true, also, of saints in Heaven, for all the fullness of the Church triumphant is in Christ as well as that of the Church militant. They are nothing even in Heaven without Him. The pure river of the Water of Life of which they drink proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. He has made them priests and kings, and in His power they reign. Those snowy robes were washed and made white in His blood. The Lamb is the temple of Heaven, the light of Heaven. His marriage is the joy of Heaven. And the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, is the song of Heaven.

Not all the harps above could make a heavenly place if Christ were gone—for He is the Heaven of Heaven, and fills all in all. It pleased the Father that for all saints and sinners all fullness should be treasured up in Christ Jesus. I feel that my text overwhelms me. Men may sail round the world, but who can circumnavigate so vast a subject as this? As far as the east is from the west so wide is its reach of blessings—

***“Philosophers have measured mountains,   
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states, and kings,   
Walked with a staff to Heaven, and traced fountains—   
But there are two vast spacious things,   
The which to measure it does more behoove—   
Yet few there are that sound them—   
Grace and Love.”***

Who is he that shall be able to express all that is meant by our text? For here we have “all” and “fullness”—and in fullness and a fullness in all. The words are both exclusive and inclusive. They deny that there is any fullness elsewhere, for they claim all for Christ. They shut out all others. “It pleased the Father that *in Him* should *all* fullness dwell.” Not in you, you pretended successors of the Apostles, can anything dwell that I need. I can do well enough without you! No, I would not insult my Savior by trading with you, for since “all fullness” is in Him, what can there be in you that I can require?

Go to your dupes who know not Christ—those who possess the exceeding riches of Christ’s Grace will not bow to you. We are “complete in Christ” without you, O hierarchy of bishops! Without you, you conclave of cardinals! And without you, O fallible infallible, unholy Holiness of Rome! He who has all in Christ would be insane, indeed, if he looked for more—or having fullness craved for emptiness. This text drives us from all confidence in men, yes, or even in angels, by making us see that everything is treasured up in Jesus Christ.

Brethren, if there is any good in what is called Catholicism, or in ritualism, or in the modern philosophical novelties, let religionists have what they find there. We shall not envy them, for they can find nothing worth having in their forms of worship or belief but what we must have already in the Person of the all-sufficient Savior. What if their candles burn brightly—the sun itself is ours! What if they are successors of the Apostles—we follow the Lamb Himself wherever He goes! What if they are exceedingly wise—we dwell with the Incarnate Wisdom Himself! Let them go to their cisterns— we will abide by the fountain of Living Water.

But, indeed, there is no light in their luminaries—they do but increase the darkness. They are blind leaders of the blind. They put their sounding emptiness into competition with the all-fullness of Jesus Christ. They preach another Gospel which is not another. The imprecation of the Apostle be upon them! They add unto the words of God, and He shall add to them its plagues!

While the text is exclusive it is also inclusive. It shuts in everything that is required for time and for eternity for all the blood-bought. It is an ark containing all good things conceivable, yes, and many that are as yet inconceivable. For by reason of our weakness we have not yet conceived the fullness of Christ. Things which you yet have not asked nor even *thought*, He is able to give you abundantly. If you should arrive at the consecration of martyrs, the piety of Apostles, the purity of angels, yet should you never have seen or be able to think of anything pure, lovely, and of good report, that was not already treasured up in Christ Jesus.

All the rivers flow into this sea, for from this sea they came. As the atmosphere surrounds all the earth, and all things live in that sea of air, so all good things are contained in the blessed Person of our dear Redeemer. Let us join to praise Him. Let us extol Him with heart and voice, and let sinners be reconciled unto God by Him. If all the good things are in Him which a sinner can require to make him accountable with God, then let the sinner come at once through such a Mediator!

Let doubts and fears vanish at the sight of the mediatorial fullness. Jesus must be able to save to the uttermost, since all fullness dwells in Him. Come, Sinner—come and receive Him! Believe in Him and you shall find yourself made perfect in Christ Jesus.

***“The moment a sinner believes ,  
And trusts in His crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through His blood.”***

**II.** Having thus spoken of what, we now turn to consider WHERE. “It pleased the Father that in *Him* should all fullness dwell.” Where else could all fullness have been placed? There was wanted a vast *capacity to contain* “all fullness.” Where dwells there a being with nature capacious enough to compass within himself all fullness? As well might we ask, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” To Him only could it belong to contain “all fullness,” for He must be equal with God, the Infinite.

How suitable was the Son of the Highest, who “was by Him, as one brought up with Him,” to become the grand storehouse of all the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, Divine Grace, and salvation. Moreover, there was wanted not only capacity to contain, but *immutability to retain* the fullness, for the text says, “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*,” that is, abide, and remain forever. Now if any kind of fullness could be put into us mutable creatures, yet by reason of our frailty we should prove but broken cisterns that can hold no water. The Redeemer is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever—therefore was it meet that all fullness should be placed in Him.

“The Son abides ever.” “He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.” “Being made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all they that obey Him.” “His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” Perhaps the sweetest thought is that the “all fullness” is fitly placed in Christ Jesus because in Him there is a *suitability to distribute it*, so that we may *obtain* it from Him. How could we come to God Himself for Grace, for “even our God is a consuming fire”? But Jesus Christ, while God, is also Man like ourselves, truly Man, of a meek lowly spirit, and therefore easily approachable.

They who know Him delight in nearness to Him. Is it not sweet that all fullness should be treasured up in Him who was the friend of publicans and sinners? And who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost? The Man who took the child up on His knee and said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me”? The Man who was tempted in all points like as we are? The Man who touched the sick, no, who “bore their sicknesses”? The Man who gave His hands to the nails, and His heart to the spear?

That blessed Man, into the print of whose nails His disciple, Thomas, put his finger, and into whose side he thrust his hand. It is He, the incarnate God, in whom all fullness dwells! Come, then, and receive of Him, you who are the weakest, the most mean, and most sinful of men. Come at once, O Sinner, and fear not!—

***“Why ar e you afraid to come,   
And tell Him all your case?   
He will not pronounce your doom,   
Nor frown you from His face.  
Will you fear Immanuel?   
Or dread the Lamb of God,   
Who, to save your soul from Hell,   
Has shed His precious blood?”***

Let it be noted here, however, very carefully, that while fullness is treasured up in Christ, it is not said to be treasured up in the *doctrines* of Christ—though they are full and complete—and we need no other teachings when the Spirit reveals the Son in us. Nor is it said to be treasured up in the *commands* of Christ, although they are amply sufficient for our guidance. But it is said, “It pleased the Father that *in Him*,” in His Person, “should all fullness dwell.” In Him, as God Incarnate dwells in all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Not as a myth, a dream, a thought, a fiction, but as a *living*, *real* Personality. We must lay hold of this.

I know that the fullness dwells in Him officially as Prophet, Priest, and King—but the fullness lies not in the Prophetic mantle, nor in the priestly ephod, nor in the royal vesture—but in the Person that wears all these. “It pleased the Father that *in Him* should all fullness dwell.” You must get to the very Christ in your faith and rest alone in Him, or else you have not reached the treasury wherein all fullness is stored up. All fullness is in Him radically. If there is fullness in His work, or His gifts, or His promises, all is derived from His Person, which gives weight and value to all.

All the promises are yes and amen in *Christ Jesus*. The merit of His death lies mainly in His Person, because He was God who gave Himself for us, and His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. The excellence of His Person gave fullness to His sacrifice ([Heb 1:3](tw://bible.*?id=58.1.3|_AUTODETECT_|)). His power to save at this very day lies in His Person, for “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing *He ever lives to make intercession for them*.” I desire you to see this, and feel it. For when your soul clasps the pierced feet of Jesus, and looks up into the face more marred than that of any man—even if you cannot understand all His works and offices—yet if you believe in Him you have reached the place wherein all fullness dwells—and of His fullness you shall receive.

Beloved, remember our practical aim. Praise His Person, you Saints! Be you reconciled to God through His Person, you Sinners! You angels, lead us in the song! You spirits redeemed by blood, sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” and our hearts shall keep tune with yours, for we owe the same debt to Him. Glory be unto the Person of the Blessed Lamb. “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever.”

Would God we could see Him face to face, and adore Him as we would! O Sinners, will you not be reconciled to God through Him, since all fullness is in Him, and He stoops to your weakness, and holds forth His pierced hands to greet you? See Him stretching out both His hands to receive you while He sweetly woos you to come to God through Him! Come unto Him! O come with hasty steps, you Penitents! Come at once, you guilty ones! Who would not be reconciled unto God by such a One as this, in whom all fullness of Grace is made to dwell?

**III.** The third question is, WHY? *“It pleased the Father*.” That is answer enough. He is Sovereign, let Him do as He wills. Ask the reason for election, you shall receive no other than this, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” That one answer may reply to ten thousand questions, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems Him good.” Once “it pleased the Father to bruise Him,” and now, “it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

Sovereignty may answer the question sufficiently, but listen! I hear Justice speak. Justice says there was no Person in Heaven or under Heaven so qualified to contain the fullness of Grace as Jesus. None so qualified to be glorified as the Savior, who “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a Man, humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross.”

It is but justice that the Grace which He has brought to us should be treasured up in Him. And while Justice speaks, Wisdom will not withhold her voice. Wise are You, O Jehovah, to treasure up Grace in Christ, for to Him men can come. And coming to Him, as unto a living Stone, chosen of God and precious, men find Him precious, also, to their souls. The Lord has laid our sin in the right place, for He has laid it upon one that is mighty, and who is as loving as He is mighty, as ready as He is able to save.

Moreover, in the fitness of things the Father’s pleasure is the first point to be considered, for all things ought to be to the good pleasure of God. It is a great underlying rule of the universe that all things were created for God’s pleasure. God is the Source and Fountain of eternal love, and it is but meet that He should convey it to us by what channel He may elect. Bowing, therefore, in lowly worship at His Throne, we are glad that in this matter the fullness dwells where it perpetually satisfies the decree of Heaven. It is well that, “it pleased the Father.”

Now, Brethren, if it pleased the Father to place all Grace in Christ, let us praise the elect Savior. What pleases God pleases us. Where would you desire to have Grace placed, my Brethren, but in the Well-Beloved? The whole Church of God is unanimous about this. If I could save myself I would not. I would think salvation to be no salvation if it did not glorify Jesus. This is the very crown and glory of being saved—that our being saved will bring honor to Christ! It is delightful to think that Christ will have the glory of all God’s Grace.

It were shocking if it were not so. Who could bear to see Jesus robbed of His reward? We are indignant that any should usurp His place, and ashamed of ourselves that we do not glorify Him more. No joy ever visits my soul like that of knowing that Jesus is highly exalted, and that to Him “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

A sister in Christ, in her kindness and gratitude, used language to me the other day which brought a blush to my cheek, for I felt ashamed to be so undeserving of the praise. She said, “Your ministry profits me because you glorify Christ so much.” Ah, I thought, if you knew how I *would* glorify Him if I could, and how far I fall below what I gladly would do for Him, you would not commend me. I could weep over the best sermons I have ever preached because I cannot extol my Lord enough, and my conceptions are so low, and my words so poor. Oh, if one could but attain really to honor Him, and put another crown upon His head, it were Heaven, indeed!

We are in this agreed with the Father, for if it pleases Him to glorify His Son and we sincerely feel that it pleases us. Ought not those who are yet unrenewed to hasten to be reconciled to God by such a Redeemer? If it pleases the Father to put all Grace in Christ, O Sinner, does it not please you to come and receive it through Christ? Christ is the meeting place for a sinner and his God. God is in Christ, and when you come to Christ, God meets you, and a treaty of peace is made between you and the Most High.

Are you not agreed with God in this—that Christ shall be glorified? Do you not say, “I would glorify Him by accepting, this morning, all His Grace, love, and mercy”? Well, if you are willing to receive Jesus, God has made you willing, and that *proves* His willingness to save you. He is pleased with Christ. Are you pleased with Christ? If so, there is *already* peace between you and God, for Jesus “is our peace.”

**IV.** We must close by dwelling upon the WHEN. When is all fullness in Jesus? It is there in all time—past, present, and to come. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness *dwell*.” Fullness, then, was in Christ of old, is in Christ today, will be in Christ forever. Perpetuity is here indicated. All fullness was, is, shall be in the Person of Jesus Christ. Every saint saved under the old dispensation found the fullness of his salvation in the coming Redeemer. Every saint saved since the Advent is saved through the selfsame fullness. From the streaming fountain of the wounds of Christ on Calvary redemption flows evermore.

And as long as there is a sinner to be saved, or one elect soul to be ingathered, Christ’s blood shall never lose its power— the fullness of merit and Grace shall abide the same. While the expression “*dwell*” indicates perpetuity, does not it indicate *constancy and accessibility*? A man who dwells in a house is always to be found there—it is his home. The text seems to me to say that this fullness of Grace is always to be found in Christ, ever abiding in Him. Knock at this door by prayer, and you shall find it at home.

If a sinner anywhere is saying, “God be merciful to me!” mercy has not gone out on loan—it dwells in Christ both night and day. It is there now at this moment. There is life in a *look* at the Crucified One, not at certain canonical hours, but at *any* hour, in *any* place, by *any* man who looks. “From the end of the earth will I cry unto You, when my heart is overwhelmed,” and my prayer shall not be rejected. There is fullness of mercy in Christ to be had at any time, at any season, from any place.

It pleased the Father that all fullness should permanently abide in Him as in a house whose door is never shut. Above all, we see here *immutability*. All fullness dwells in Christ—that is to say it is never exhausted nor diminished. On the last day that this world shall stand before it is given up to be devoured with fervent heat, there shall be found as much fullness in Christ as in the hour when the first sinner looked unto Him and was lightened. O Sinner, the bath that cleanses is as efficacious to take out spots today as it was when the dying thief washed in them! O you despairing Sinner, there is as much consolation in Christ today as when He said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven you, go in peace.”

His Grace has not diminished! He is today as great a Savior as when Magdalene was delivered from seven devils. Till time shall be no more He will exercise the same infinite power to forgive, to renew, to deliver, to sanctify, to perfectly save souls. Shall not all this make us praise Christ, since all fullness is permanent in Him? Let our praises abide where the fullness abides. “All Your works praise You, O God, but Your saints shall bless You.” Yes, they shall never cease their worship, because You shall never abate Your fullness.

This is a topic upon which we who love Christ, are all agreed. We can dispute about doctrines, and we have different views upon ordinances. But we have all one view concerning our Lord Jesus. Let Him sit on a glorious high throne! When shall the day dawn that He shall ride through our streets in triumph? When shall England and Scotland, and all the nations become truly the dominions of the great King? Our prayer is that He may hasten the spread of the Gospel, and His own coming as seems good in His sight.

O that He were glorious in the eyes of men! And surely if all fullness abides perpetually in Christ, there is good reason why the unreconciled should, this morning, avail themselves of it. May the blessed Spirit show you, O Sinner, that there is enough in Jesus Christ to meet your wants. That your weakness need not keep you back, nor even the hardness of your heart, nor the inveteracy of your will. For Christ is able even to subdue all things to Himself. If you seek Him He will be found of you.

Seek Him while He may be found. Leave not your seat until your soul is bowed at His feet. I think I see Him—cannot your hearts picture Him—glorious today, but yet the same Savior who was nailed like a felon to the Cross for guilty ones? Reach forth your hand and touch the silver scepter of mercy which He holds out to you, for those who touch it live. Look into that dear face where tears once made their furrows, and grief its lines. Look, I say, and live! Look at that brow radiant with many a glittering gem—it once wore a crown of thorns.

Let His love melt you to repentance. Throw yourself into His arms now feeling, “If I perish I will perish here. He shall be my only hope.” As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, there shall never be a soul of you lost who will come and trust in Jesus! Heaven and earth shall pass away but this Word of God shall never pass away. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” God has said it—will He not do it? He has declared it, it must stand fast. “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

O trust Him! I implore you by the mercy of God, and by the fullness of Jesus, trust Him NOW! This day! God grant you may, for Christ’s sake. Amen.   
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—[Colossians 1](tw://bible.*?id=51.1.0|_AUTODETECT_|).

The attention of all our friends is earnestly directed to the SERIES of SPECIAL SERVICES AT THE TABERNACLE. In order that London friends may unite with us we publish the meetings week by week, and at the same time our country friends will join with us in spirit—*Lord’s-Day, March 5*.—A deputation will address Mrs. Bartlett’s class and the senior classes of the Sunday school. As also Mrs. Bartlett’s children’s meeting at the Almshouses. *Monday, March 6*—Prayer Meeting for females only, at six. For young people at the same time. Special Prayer Meetings at seven for the various agencies of the Church. Meetings for enquirers at half-past eight. *Tuesday, March 7*—The Pastor and others will meet the parents of the Sunday school to tea, and speak with them upon heavenly things. *Wednesday, March 8*—Annual Meeting of Mrs. Bartlett’s class. *Thursday, March 9*—Closing gathering. May our hearts be filled with adoring praise. We shall meet to commemorate our Lord’s death. Members will please show their tickets. Spectators will find room in the gallery.

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÷Col 1.23

STAND FAST  
NO. 1688

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 27, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”** *Col 1:23***.**

I THINK this morning we showed pretty plainly that many a soul has a great struggle to attain to the hope of the Gospel. [See “Despair Denounced and Grace Glorified,” No. 1676.] Not without hand-to-hand fighting do many hearts lay hold on Christ and eternal life. Conscience often sets up a chevaux de frise around the hill of Calvary and thus cuts off the convicted sinner from approaching his Savior. Doubts and fears, the Black Watch of evil, drive back the coming ones and worry those who would gladly hide in the Rock of Ages. Satan summons all his hosts to push men back from the Cross that they may not come to Christ and live.

But, Brothers and Sisters, the battle does not end when, by a desperate rush, a man has come to Christ. In many it assumes a new form—the enemy now attempts to drag the trembler from his refuge and eject him from his stronghold! It is difficult to get at the hope of the Gospel, but quite as difficult to keep it so as not to be moved away from it. If Satan spends great power in keeping us from the hope, he uses equal force in endeavoring to drag us away from it—and equal cunning in endeavoring to allure us from it. Hence the Apostle tells us not to be moved away from the hope of the Gospel. The exhortation is necessary in presence of an imminent danger. Do not think that in the moment when you believe in Christ the conflict is over, or you will be bitterly disappointed! It is then that the battle renews itself and every inch of the road swarms with enemies.

Between here and Heaven you will always have to fight, more or less, and frequently the severest struggle will be at a time when you are least prepared for it. There may be smooth passages in your career and you may, for a while, be like your Savior in the wilderness, of whom it is said, “Then the devil departed from Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him.” But you may not, therefore, cry, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved,” for fair weather may not outlast a single day! Do not grow secure, or carnally presumptuous. There is but a short space between one battle and another in this world. It is a series of skirmishes even when it does not assume the form of a pitched battle. He that would win Heaven must fight for it! He that would take the new Jerusalem must scale it and if he has the wits to take Jacob’s ladder and set it against the wall and climb up that way, he will win the City. “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.”

At this time our subject is not the winning, but the wearing—not the taking but the holding of the fort. “Be not moved away,” you that have come to it. “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

I. First, BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT OF THAT HOPE so as to give up any part of the hope which is revealed to you by the Gospel. What is your hope? First, it is the hope of full salvation—the hope that, inasmuch as you have believed in Jesus Christ, you are free from all condemnation at the present moment and shall be free from all condemnation in the future as to all your sins. And that, in addition to this, He that takes away the condemnation of sin will also destroy the power of it over you. You have this hope—that being made to love righteousness you shall be enabled to walk in obedience and “to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.”

Your hope is that one day you shall be presented holy, without blame and unreprovable in the sight of the great Father. You shall, one day, be presented “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,” cleansed from all guilt and cleansed from all tendency to sin and to corruption—and made like unto the perfect creature of God when first it comes from His hands. Oh, this is a blessed hope! “He that has this hope in him purifies himself even as Christ is pure.” We hope that we shall be like unto Christ, Himself, and that the Glory of His holiness shall be our glory—and we shall see His face and His name shall be on our foreheads—and we shall be without fault before the Throne of God. Now, never give that up! Never allow a particle of it to be diminished. God means all that He has said, and more, rather than less. Let no man debase the currency of Heaven or clip the coin of the realm of the Great King.

The first part of it—hold to it, that the Lord Jesus Christ has cleansed you from all the guilt and penalty of sin, so that not a speck remains to accuse or condemn you. Hold to it, moreover, that if He has once washed you, you shall not need to wash, again, in that fountain filled with blood, for, “He that is washed needs not except to wash his feet.” And that washing shall be given to him by the condescending hands of Christ. The water shall be a second cure of that which the blood has already cleansed and removed. The blood-washing has removed all guilt and prevented all possibility that sin shall have dominion over you. Complete forgiveness and full justification are proofs that through your Lord’s endurance of the death penalty, you are no more under the Law, but under Grace.

My soul rejoices, tonight, in perfect pardon! I will not take off a corner of it so as to allow that the smallest charge can lie against us! We are complete in Christ! He that believes in Him is justified from all things—

*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast!  
And, oh, my Soul, with wonder view—  
For sins to come, here’s pardon too!”*

All pardon is provided in the one great Sacrifice offered by our bleeding Lord who has now gone into the heavens to plead the merit of His blood. Never take off a fraction from that other part of full salvation, namely, the possibility and the absolute certainty that every sinful tendency now in your nature shall be utterly destroyed. There shall remain in you no root of bitterness, no scar of evil, no footprint of iniquity! There shall be no tinder in your soul upon which the sparks of temptation can fall so as to live and make a flame! And when the Prince of this world comes he shall find nothing in you. Then you shall enter into your eternal rest, for God keeps not His ripe wheat in the field, but takes it Home when it is once fit to be gathered into the garner. This is your hope through the Gospel—be not moved away from it.

In connection with this, there is the hope of final perseverance. I confess that to me it is one of the most attractive doctrines of God’s Word, that, “the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” For I am “confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “He that lives and believes in Me shall never die.” There are many assurances to this effect and if anything definite is taught in Scripture, I am confident that this is among the plainest of such teachings!

I beseech you, do not shun this doctrine as though it would lead you into the least presumption. If properly understood, its legitimate effect is the very reverse of carelessness! If it is true that once enlisted in this army of the Lord, you must and shall fight until you are a conqueror, then there is no temptation to lay down the sword, for a while, in the hope of taking it up, again, at a more convenient season. If, as some say, you may be Christ’s soldier today and desert tomorrow and then be enlisted again—if it is indeed true that a man may be regenerated and then lose the Divine life and, upon repentance, be re-regenerated and re-re-re-re-reregenerated—I know not how many times—I am not aware that this novelty is hinted at in my unrevised New Testament! There I read of being “born again,” but not of being born again and again and again and again and again and again—I say I cannot find a trace of this in the Bible!

On the other hand, I find that if the one regeneration fails, which is impossible, there would remain nothing else to be done! God’s best work is broken down and He will never try it again. He has said, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and bring forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessings from God; but that which bears thorns and briers is rejected, and is near unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.” You cannot re-salt the salt if it has once lost its savor. If, then, Grace does utterly depart, which I believe to be impossible, there remains no hope for such a one. God’s supreme effort, according to that theory, has been made and failed!

Now, there is nothing for it but that the land which has received the dew of Heaven and brought forth no fruit, is near unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” We have but made the supposition to show you the danger, upon whose brink you stand, and over whose verge you would slide if Grace did not prevent. If you, indeed, believe in Christ Jesus, set this to your seal, that He will keep you to the end! Whatever happens, “I am persuaded that neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” For dear life hold on to the hope of final preservation, for there is a purifying, encouraging, stimulating power about that precious Truth of God! “He keeps the feet of His saints.” “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

We have a hope beyond this, for we believe that we shall experience the Resurrection. Though they fall down and men call them corpses, they are precious in the sight of the Lord. The grave shall be a refining pot out of which the pure metal of our purified body shall come forth. At the word of the Lord, the dry bones shall live—they shall be clothed with flesh—and skin shall come upon them, if, after that fashion, the body is to be raised. But if not—if the body is to assume another form and we are to be made like unto a Glory which as yet we cannot comprehend, then we may be sure of this—that we shall so rise that mortality shall put on immortality and corruption shall give place to incorruption! In any case, our bodies shall rise again. The Grace of God secures the bodies as well as the souls of the saints. Christ bought not the half of a man, but the whole trinity of our manhood is His redeemed inheritance—spirit, soul and body shall dwell forever with Him—for He has redeemed our undivided manhood!

Never give up that hope, either, concerning yourselves or your friends. Let nothing shake your confidence in the Resurrection! Let no philosophical explanation fritter it away. No other historical fact is so well attested as the Resurrection of Christ, which is the very cornerstone of our confidence. “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins. Then they, also, which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

Often and often, when I am sorely beset with devilish temptations and insinuations as to the eternal hope of my soul and body, I fly to this— Jesus Christ did rise from the dead and, inasmuch as He rose from the dead, He has come back to tell us that there is another world and that not only our souls, but our bodies shall inherit a far more blessed condition than this present one! Hold on to this hope of the Gospel, and never let it go—

*“The Lord is risen! He lives!  
The First-born from the dead, To Him the Father gives  
To be creation’s Head.  
O’er all forever reigning,  
Of death He holds the keys;  
And Hell—His might constraining— Obeys His high decrees.  
Flies now the gloom that shaded The vale of death to me;  
The terrors that invaded  
Are lost, O Christ, in Thee!  
The grave, no more appalling,*

*Invites me to repose;  
Asleep in Jesus falling,  
To rise as Jesus rose.”*

Then remember, you have the hope of the Second Advent. If Jesus comes before you die, you will meet Him—gladly meet and welcome the Son of God upon this earth! You shall be changed so that you shall be fit to inherit the incorruptible glories of the skies. You shall see your Redeemer when He stands in the latter day upon the earth. As Job said, “In my flesh shall I see God, whom my eyes shall see for myself, and not another.” Have joy, then, at every thought of your Master’s coming! Do not put it among dark prophecies or doubtful dreams. It is a clearly revealed Truth of God that Jesus will come again and take His people up to their eternal Home—“Therefore comfort one another with these words,” and be not moved away from that hope of the Gospel which lies so sweetly in the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ!

And, once more, we have this hope—that when we have passed through all that concerns time and are in eternity, that shoreless, bottomless sea— there remains for us no fear or dread, but we shall be “forever with the Lord.” I notice that certain of those who deny the eternity of future punishment are ready, for the sake of their notion, to pull down the battlements of Heaven, itself, and to make the joy of saints to be as short as the misery of sinners. I, for one, will not pawn Heaven in that fashion, to make sin cheap for the willfully impenitent! Once landed on that eternal shore, there are no storms to dread or hurricanes to fear for these frail boats of ours! There shall not a wave of trouble roll across our peaceful spirits when once we cast anchor in the “Fair Havens,” in the Port of Peace forever!

Be not dismayed as though there would be an after-probation, or a “purgatory,” or a lim bus patrum, or any of those pretty places that have filled priests’ pockets so long—and are now being newly vamped and produced by our proud thinkers as an aid to their pretty speculations! We will have no “purgatory” under any form—it is the larder of priests and the refuge of heresy-mongers—and there is not a word of it in God’s Bible! We stand to the text—“So shall we be forever with the Lord.” “The righteous shall go away into life eternal.” There is “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you.” “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel,” as to the objects of that hope!

II. But now, secondly, I charge you, Beloved, before God, that you BE NOT MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL AS TO THE GROUND OF THAT HOPE. And what is the ground of that hope? The ground of that hope is, first, the rich, free, Sovereign Grace of God because He has said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The Lord claims for Himself the prerogative of mercy and, as He can exercise it without the violation of His justice through the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, we joy and rejoice in the fact that men are not saved because of any natural goodness of disposition, or because of anything that they have done, or ever shall do!

The children being not yet born, neither having done good nor evil, the Divine decree stood fast fixed in the Sovereign will and immutable counsels of Jehovah! And this is a good ground of hope for the very chief of sinners. If He has saved the dying thief—if He has saved the adulterer—if He has saved even the murderer, why should He not save me? He can if He will and He is exceedingly gracious, infinite in compassion and willing not the deaths of any, but that all should come to repentance! It is in the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin and the cause of that mercy is itself! The reason of Divine love is Divine love! Because God is gracious, therefore He bestows His Grace upon the undeserving and the lost. Be not moved away from this.

The ground of our salvation is, next, the merit of Christ—what Christ is; what Christ has done—what Christ has suffered. This is the ground upon which God saves the sons of men. Even Cardinal Bellarmine, the mighty opponent of Luther—perhaps the best opponent that he had, whose eyes saw much of Gospel Light—once said this, “That albeit good works are necessary unto salvation, yet, inasmuch as no man can be sure that he has performed as many good works as will save him, it is, upon the whole, safest to trust, alone, in the merits and sufferings of Christ.” Cardinal, the safest way suits me! If that is the best and safest, what better do any of us need? Where is the rest for our soul if the ground of our hope is to be what we are, or what we do, or what we feel? But when we fall back upon the finished work of Jesus Christ and believe in Him, whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation for sin, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world—I say, when we fall back on Him—then we have something solid to rest upon!

Our eyes cannot bear to look into eternity so long as we cling, in the least degree, to human merit! But when it is all put aside and we look to Him bleeding yonder on the Cross, then is there a “peace that passes all understanding,” filling our hearts by Christ Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, if a man were to live in good works without a single sin for 10,000 years, he would be well recompensed for that by half-an-hour of Heaven! How, then, can we expect to merit eternal bliss by any works of ours? Ah, no! The hope were vanity! Heaven is too precious a thing to be purchased by anything that we can, by any possibility, do—but it is not too great to be purchased by the blood of Christ! And when we come to His Atonement, our anchor holds abidingly. “Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

Another ground of our hope is this—that God has solemnly pledged that “whoever believes in Christ shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” If, then, we really, and in very deed, believe in Jesus Christ and rest on Him, we cannot perish, for God cannot contradict Himself! Thus it is written—hear it and accept it—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Those of us, then, who trust the Savior, and Him only—and have made confession of that trust in His own appointed way—know for sure that God’s eternal veracity is staked upon our salvation! It is not possible that the Lord should cast away a Believer! Is it not written, “The just shall live by faith”? We live because we believe in the Ever-Living One! “He that believes in Him has everlasting life,” Be not moved away from this Gospel hope which God, who cannot lie, has set before us—

“ *The Covenant of the King of Kings  
Shall stand forever sure!  
Beneath the shadow of His wings  
His saints repose secure.”*

Another ground of our hope is the Immutability of God. God changes not and, therefore, the sons of Jacob are not consumed. The Immutability of Christ also confirms our hope, for He is, “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” The unchanging power of His blood is a tower of strength to our faith—

*“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more.”*

If God is Immutable, then those that believe in Him have an immutable hope—be sure that you never cast it away! But, once again, our hope of the Gospel is grounded in the Infallibility of Scripture. The Papist has an infallible pope, but we have an Infallible Bible. If that which is spoken in this Book is not true, neither is our hope sure! If these things are questionable, our confidence is questionable! But if this Word of God abides fast, forever and ever, though Heaven and earth should pass away, then he that believes and builds on this Infallible Truth may rejoice and stand fast! I beseech you, “be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.”

III. So far have I come with all my heart and soul and I believe that you, dear Friends, the members of this Church, at any rate, have accompanied me. Now let us consider HOW WE MAY BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL unless Grace is given to prevent us. We may be moved from the hope of the Gospel in the following ways. Sometimes by a conceit of ourselves. You may get off the ground of confidence in Free Grace to think, “Now I am somebody. Have not I prayed at the Prayer Meeting? Did not friends say that they were edified by it? Have not I preached a wonderful sermon? Am I not generous? Have not I given large sums to the Church and to the poor? Am I not somebody?”

Ah, you and the devil, together, can make a commotion about that and I have no doubt that all he tells you, you will very greedily suck in, for we like to be praised and, though the praise comes from Satan, himself, it is welcome to our proud flesh! Well, whenever we get to think we are somebody, we are moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Somebody says, “But I am not a sinner.” Ah, then He did not come to save you! Do you say, “I was once a sinner, but I have grown so perfect that I no longer sin”? Do you? Then you are removed from that hope which belongs to those who confess and lament their sins! You unChristianize yourself as soon as you strike your name out of the list of SINNERS who are saved by the Savior’s Grace! You are a sinner and Christ died to save you, but do not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel by a vain notion that you are no longer sinful! Christ came not to heal the whole, but those who are sick.

Do not be moved away, on the other hand, by despondency. Satan does not mind which way you get off the Rock—whether it is by jumping up or by jumping down—it is all the same to him, so long as you leave the Rock of your salvation. Many there are that go up in a balloon of conceit, while others are ready to roll down the steeps of despondency and despair. But be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel either one way or the other! The least sin ought to make you humble, but the greatest sin ought not to make you despair. If you are, even now, as big a sinner as any 50 men rolled into one, Christ can save you readily—no, has saved you if you put your trust in Him! But, on the other hand, if you presume that you are not guilty, or despairingly say, “I am guilty, but I dare not believe that He can forgive me,” you are, in either case, moved away from the hope of the Gospel! May eternal mercy keep you hourly penitent and believing, for repentance and faith walk on either side of a Christian till he enters the pearly gates.

You may be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, also, by false teaching. If, for instance, you do not believe Christ to be, “Light of light, very God of very God,” you have moved away from our hope which depends upon His Godhead. If you think that the priest can save you, you are moved away from the one only Priest before whom all other priests must let their censers die out into blackness! ONLY JESUS CHRIST can save you! If you listen to any teaching which puts your working or your doing into the place of Christ, you are drinking in error and you will be removed from the hope of your calling, which is Free Grace, received by faith, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You can be removed from the hope of your calling by hoping to live by feelings. Ah, there are many Christians who get tempted that way! They feel so happy and that is the reason why they believe that they are saved. That is not the reason why I believe I am saved. I am saved because I trust Christ—and if I were as miserable as misery, itself, I should be just as truly saved as if I were as happy as Heaven itself! It is faith that does it, not feeling! Faith is precious, feeling is fickle. Believing, we stand firm, but by feeling we are tossed about. True feeling follows faith and, as such, is valuable—but faith is the root—and the life of the tree lies there, not in the branches and leaves, which may be taken away, and yet the tree will survive.

Some have very joyous feelings. They swim in trances and deliriums and yet they are all wrong. Rest on Christ, whether it is bright day or dark night with you—though He slay you, trust in Him—as much trust in Him as if He pressed you to His bosom! Faith must abide though joy departs! If your feelings are down in the dust—if you feel as though you could not hold up your head or look towards Heaven—never mind that, but cling to the promise, feel what you may. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and good feelings will follow, by-andby, but, just now, your first business is this—“He that believes in Him is not condemned.” “He that believes in Him has everlasting life,” Stand to that hope of the Gospel!

Many are moved away from the hope of their calling by a dazzle of intellect. They are content simply to believe in Jesus till they meet some fine man, a thinker with a big forehead and a large box which ought to be full of brains. We have not been inside to see what is there, but the preacher talks much of his thought and culture. He tells you that you are behind the age—that a faith which believes God might have done very well for the times of Cromwell and the roundhead Puritans, but that, nowadays, we are far in advance of all that kind of thing. Whenever a so-called “brother” dazzles you like that, let him dazzle! Let him shine as much as he likes! But, as for you, tell him that he who has once looked the sun in the face is not to be dazzled by a glowworm! Go back to your wax and dazzle your brother worms, but you cannot dazzle me!

A man who once has come to know Christ experimentally and lives by faith upon the Son of God, may, if he likes, read all your essays and reviews, and all the articles in your Quarterlies which ridicule the power of faith, whether in living or in dying, and he will say, when he has read them all through, “This is all they know about it.” I daresay that if a horse were to write a book, he would tell us that roast beef is exceedingly bad food to eat. “Well,” we should say, “that is a very natural opinion for a horse! Let him keep to his oats and his hay.” And when a man says that there is no power in prayer, he shows that he does not know anything about praying! Let him keep to what he knows and hold his tongue about what he does not know! He says that it cannot be, so we say, “But it is so”—and when we have tasted and handled it and known it—there is no dazzling us out of it by a sense of the great man’s superiority of mind!

I have often thought that those who cry up their own learning must have wonderfully little of it, for I have jotted down in my pocketbook that I never saw the Bank of England send its bullion anywhere with a number of bells upon the cart to say, “Here is bullion coming along!” But I have noticed that every dustman does that! When I hear the bells ringing so much about “culture,” I say to myself, “Dust on!” If they had real diamonds on board, they would hold their tongues about them! At any rate, dust or diamonds, the load in these men’s carts is nothing to us—we have a more sure word of testimony to which our experience has set its seal. We have believed in Christ Jesus and found salvation and, by God’s Grace, we will not be moved away from the hope of our calling!

Lastly, be not moved away by persecution, or by sneers, or by ridicule. The persecution of this present day is a small thing compared with what our forefathers suffered. Look at that picture of the amphitheatre, by Dore. All is over! Every seat is empty! The stars, like the eyes of God, are looking down upon the arena. There lie the bodies of the saints and there are the tigers and the lions prowling over the sanded floor, tearing the carcasses which they have slain. But the painter pictures a vision of angels descending from over the uttermost parapet of the amphitheatre— they are tenderly watching over those precious bodies, for they have triumphed! And from the mouths of the beasts they have gone to the thrones of the angels!  
Only hold fast where the saints held fast at the first, “in nothing, terrified by your adversaries.” No more mind the advance of learning than they dreaded the universality of ignorance! We have to fight with both the ignorance of this world and the wisdom of it, too—“But the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man.” How readily shall the Divine wisdom and power make an end of learned babblings! Be not moved away from the hope of your calling. “Cast not away your confidence” which has great recompense of reward. Be like the Grecian youth who took his shield to battle—let it be your glory and your defense. We would say to you what the Spartan mother said to her son— “Come back with your shield, or on it.” Come back with the Gospel well strapped upon your arm like a golden shield, or, if you die, may it become your bier and may you be borne Home upon it as a steadfast Believer in Christ! But never be moved away from the hope of your calling, for so would your shield be vilely cast away.

III. Lastly, WHY IS IT THAT WE CANNOT BE MOVED AWAY FROM THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL? What would follow if we were? Well, first, we will not be moved away from the hope of our calling, for there is nothing better to take its place! A man would not think of going to Australia if he heard that the wages were less there than here, the expense of living greater and the people were poorer. “No,” he would say, “I shall not jump out of the frying pan into the fire. I shall certainly stay where I am, rather than go farther and fare worse.”

Well, we are just of that mind. We do not see how we could improve ourselves. Jonathan Edwards, in one of his treatises, speaks somewhat to this effect—“If any man can prove this form of the Gospel to be untrue and a mere dream, the very best thing that he can do is to sit down and weep forever to think that he has disproved the brightest hope that ever shone upon the eyes of men.” And that is so. To have the glorious hope that, believing in Christ, we are saved, is such a blessing and such a joy that nothing can compare with it!

Where are the fields that can tempt away the sheep of Christ? Where is the shepherd that can vie with Him? Where is the light that is brighter than this eternal sun? Oh, you tempt us with your rattles like children, but, having become men, we despise them! What have you to offer of truth, of hope, of comfort, of joy equal to what we possess? Let us, each one, sing our answer to the tempter—

*“You only, Sovereign of my heart,  
My refuge, my almighty Friend,  
And can my soul from You depart,  
On whom, alone, my hopes depend?  
Let earth’s alluring joys combine,  
While You are near, in vain they call!  
One smile, one blissful smile of Yours,*

*My dearest Lord, outweighs them all!  
Your name, my inmost powers adore,  
You are my life, my joy, my care.  
Depart from You? ‘Tis death—‘tis more,  
‘Tis endless ruin, deep despair!”*

Remember, too, that if we are moved away from the hope of our calling, we shall soon be in bondage. A man may be as merry as a lark if he believes in Christ for salvation. But let him leave that and, before long, he will be as dull as an owl! What is there that can give us joy apart from Christ? Are we not bound in chains of doubt when once we leave the way of Sovereign Grace through believing in Christ? If we are moved away from the hope of our calling, we cannot grow. A tree that is frequently moved usually dies—growth there cannot be! And a man who begins in the spirit and hopes to be made perfect by the flesh. A man who begins in Free Grace and then gets to relying on his own works. A man who begins by trusting in Christ and then makes confession to a priest. A man who rests in the precious blood and then dabbles in sacraments and hopes to find salvation there—he can never grow in Grace!

He is whirled about with every oar. Every tide of doctrine puts him up stream or down stream. He can make no progress. And what good can such a man do? He cannot influence others beneficially, for he teaches one thing, today, and another, tomorrow. He says that God has saved him and the next day he doubts it. He says that the Atonement is full and free, but tomorrow he says that penance is to be performed. He cannot bless others—he does not know the way to blessing. Besides, if we were moved away from the hope of our calling, what mean, miserable wretches we would be, for we should have deserted our Savior! I wonder where I could hide my dishonorable head if I once came here to preach salvation by the works of the flesh and not by the Grace of God! I hope that you would hiss me from the platform! And I hope that you will so treat anybody that shall succeed me, when I am gone, who shall preach to you any other Gospel than that which you have received!

Hold fast, with all your might, right solemnly to the grand old faith, for if you do not, in rejecting that way of salvation, you reject yourselves! What did Christ die for, if we can be saved in some other way? Why did He pour out His blood if there is a cheaper method to win the skies? Why did He go down into the depths of death-shade, if you can force your way to Heaven by your own endeavors without Him? No, no—we will stand fast where we are, resting only and alone upon Jesus Christ our Savior! For us to leave the plan of salvation—and with this I close—is something like a soldier entrenched in an impregnable fortress accepting an invitation to come out of it! You remember how the black monarch, who has been so much run after in England, said that our soldiers ought to come out of the entrenchments?

They were rats, he said, to hide behind earthworks. If they would only come out, he would destroy them! But our soldiers were wise enough not to venture into the open until the proper time. So the world, the flesh, the devil and error say, “Come out! Come out! You talk about an Infallible Scripture and an Almighty Savior and a simple faith in Him. Come out and fight us fairly on the level.” Yes, but we do not see it and we shall never attempt it! We are like the little coney, of whom Solomon speaks. He hid himself among the rocks and, the sportsman, I have no doubt, said, “Why don’t you come out, little coney? Come, and let me be your friend.” But the coney, though he was feeble, was wise, and he hid himself in the rock all the more, because a stranger invited him out. Do the same when Satan cries, “Come away and be free. Be a man! Do not be always trusting in authority.” “No,” you say, “I shall stay where I am.”

As I was riding along in the south of France one day, I saw pair of fine birds overhead. The driver called out in the French tongue, “Eagles!” Yes, and there was a man below, with a gun, who was wishful to get a nearer acquaintance with the eagles, but they did not come down to oblige him! He pointed his rifle at them, but his shots did not reach half way, for the royal birds kept above. The higher air is the fit dominion for eagles! Up there is the eagle’s playground, where he plays with the callow lightning! Up above the smoke and clouds he dwells. Stay there, eagles! Stay there! If men can get you within range, they mean no good to you. Keep up, Christians! Keep up in the higher element, resting in Jesus Christ, and do not come down to find a perch for yourself among the trees of philosophy! Whatever we do, let us never leave the way of the Truth of God, of peace, of safety!

We are going along the King’s Highway and the thieves on the side of the road say, “Come off the highway! It is so dull and monotonous. Come into the woods! We will show you fair flowers, ferny dells and quiet caves. Come, listen to the birds that sing all day and all night, too. Come with us.” We heed you not—he that travels along the King’s Highway is under the King’s protection—but he that wanders into the dark mountains and lonesome woods may take care of himself. We shall do as we have done— follow the way that leads from the banishment—the way of trusting in the Savior and in Him, alone!

As you hold to the faith, so may God bless and enrich you. As with simple heart you plod along the road that leads to Heaven by the righteousness of the Son of God, may the Lord be with you and comfort you. But if you turn back, woe unto you! A curse will fall upon you in that day of shame and crime! The Lord keep you, that you may keep the faith. Amen.

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÷Col 1.27

CHRIST IN YOU  
NO. 1720

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”***Col 1:27***.**

THE Gospel is the grand secret—the mystery of mysteries! It was hidden from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints. To the mass of mankind it was utterly unknown and the chosen people, who saw something of it, only perceived it dimly through the smoke of sacrifices and the veil of types. It remained a mystery which wit could not guess nor invention unravel—and it would have forever have continued a secret had not God, in His infinite mercy, been pleased to reveal it by the Holy Spirit. In a still deeper sense it is even yet a hidden thing unless the Spirit of God has revealed it to us individually, for the revelation of the Gospel in the Word of God does not, of itself, instruct men unto eternal life. The light is clear enough, but it avails nothing till the eyes are opened. Each separate individual must have Christ revealed to him and in him by the work of the Holy Spirit, or else he will remain in darkness even in the midst of the Gospel day.

Blessed and happy are they to whom the Lord has laid open the Divine secret which Prophets and kings could not discover—which even angels desired to look into! Brethren, we live in a time when the Gospel is clearly revealed in the Word of God and when that Word has its faithful preachers lovingly to press home its teachings. Let us take care that we do not despise the mystery which has now become a household word. Let not the commonness of the blessing cause us to undervalue it. You remember how, in the wilderness, the Israelites fed upon angels’ food until they had enjoyed it so long, so constantly and so abundantly that in their wicked discontent they called it, “light bread”? I fear that many in these times are gorged with the Gospel like those who eat too much honey. They even venture to call the heavenly Word of God, “common-place,” and talk us if it were not only, “the old, old story,” but a stale story, too.

Are not many hungering after novelties, longing for things original and startling, thirsting after the spiritual dram-drinking of sensational preaching, dissatisfied with Christ Crucified, though He is the Bread which came down from Heaven? For us, let us keep clear of this folly! Let us rest content with the old food, praying from day to day, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” May it never happen to us as unto the Jews of the Apostolic times who utterly refused the Word of Life, so that the Truth of God became to them a stumbling-block and those who preached it were compelled to turn to the Gentiles! If we despise the heavenly message, we cannot expect to fare better than they did! Let us not incur the danger of refusing Him that speaks from Heaven! If there is life, rejoice in it! If there is light, walk in it! If there is love, rest in it. If the Lord God Almighty has, at last, set open the treasures of His Grace and put eternal bliss within your reach, stretch out the hand of faith and be enriched! Turn not your backs upon your God, your Savior, for in so doing you will turn your backs on eternal life and Heaven! God grant that none of you may do this.

In our text we have, in a few words, that great mystery with which Heaven did labor us in travail; that mystery which is to transform this poor world into new heavens and a new earth. We have it, I say, all in a nutshell in the seven words of our text—the riches of the glory of this mystery may, here, be seen set out to open view—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” By the assistance of the Divine Spirit, I shall speak upon this mystery in three ways—The essence of it is “Christ.” The sweetness of it is “Christ in you.” And the outlook of it is “the hope of glory.” The words read like a whole body of divinity condensed into a line,—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

I. The eternal mystery of the Gospel—THE ESSENCE OF IT IS CHRIST. I hardly know what is the antecedent to the word, “which,” here—whether it is, “mystery,” or, “riches,” or, “glory.” And I do not greatly care to examine which it may be. Any one of the three words will be suitable and all three will fit best of all. If it is “the mystery,” Christ is that mystery— “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” If it is the word, “glory,” beyond all question our Lord Jesus wears a “glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” Is He not “the brightness of the Father’s glory”? If we take the word, “riches,” you have often heard of “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Oh, the riches of the Grace of God which it has pleased the Father to impart unto us in Christ Jesus! Christ is the “mystery,” the “riches” and the “glory.” He is all this and, blessed be His name, He is all this among us poor Gentiles who at first were like dogs, scarcely accounted worthy to eat the crumbs from under the children’s table! And yet we are now admitted into the children’s place and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! Riches of glory among the Gentiles would have sounded like a mockery in the first ages and yet the language is most proper at this day, for all things are ours in Christ Jesus the Lord!

The essence of this mystery is Christ, Himself. In these days certain would-be wise men are laboriously attempting to constitute a church without Christ and to set forth a salvation without a Savior. But their Babel building is as a bowing wall and a tottering fence. The center of the blessed mystery of the Gospel is Christ, Himself, in His Person. What a wonderful conception it was that the infinite God should take upon Himself the nature of man! It never would have occurred to men that such a condescension would be thought of! Even now that it has been done, it is a great mystery of our faith. God and man in one Person is the wonder of Heaven, earth and Hell! Well might David exclaim, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?”

The first thought of the Incarnation was born in the unsearchably wise mind of God. It needed Omnipotent Omniscience to suggest the idea of, “Immanuel, God With Us.” Think of it! The Infinite an infant; the Ancient of days a child; the Ever-Blessed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! The idea is original, astounding, Divine! Oh, that this blending of the two natures should ever have taken place! Brothers and Sisters, the heart of the Gospel throbs in the Truth of God! The Son of the Highest was born at Bethlehem and at His birth, before He had worked a deed of righteousness or shed a drop of blood, the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men,” for they knew that the Incarnation had, within itself, a wealth of good things for men!

When the Lord, Himself, took our manhood, it meant inconceivable benediction to the human race! “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,” and in that Child and Son we find our salvation! God in our nature can mean for us nothing but joy. How favored is our race in this respect! What other creature did the Lord thus espouse? We know that He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He took upon Him human nature, and now the next being in the universe to God is man, he who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death is this day crowned with glory and honor, and made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovah’s hands.

This is, indeed, the Gospel! Do not sinners begin to hope? Is there one in your nature who is “Light of lights, very God of very God,” and do you not perceive that this must mean good for you? Does not the “Word made flesh” dwelling among men awaken hope in your bosoms and lead you to believe that you may yet be saved? Certainly the fact of there being such an union between God and man is the delight of every regenerated mind! Our Lord’s Person is, at this day, constituted in the same manner. He is still God and Man! He can still sympathize with our manhood to the fullest, for He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! And yet He can help us without limit, seeing He is equal with the Father. Though manifestly Divine, yet Jesus is none the less Human! Though truly Man, He is none the less Divine—and this is a door of hope to us, a fountain of consolation which never ceases to flow!

When we think of our Lord, we remember with His Person the glorious work which He undertook and finished on our behalf. Being found in fashion as Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He took upon Himself the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, because we had failed in our service and could not be saved unless Another did suit and service on our behalf. The Heir of all things girded Himself to be among as One that serves! What service His was! How arduous! How humble! How heavy! How all-consuming! His was a life of grief and humiliation, followed by a death of agony and scorn. Up to the Cross He carried all our load. And on the Cross He bore, that we might bear, His Father’s righteous wrath!

Oh, what has Christ not done for us? He cast our sins into the depths of the sea. He has taken the cup which we ought to have drunk forever and He has drained it dry and left not a dreg behind! He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. And now He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness and gone up to His Father’s Throne within the veil, bearing His Divine oblation and making everything right and safe for us, that, by-andby, we may follow Him and be with Him where He is! Oh yes, Brothers and Sisters, Christ’s Person and finished work are the pillars of our hope! I cannot think of what He is, what He has done, what He is doing and what He will yet do, without saying, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.”

My Brethren, every one of our Lord’s offices is a well-spring of comfort. Is He Prophet, Priest and King? Is He Friend? Is He Brother? Is He Husband? Is He Head? Every way and everywhere we lean the weight of our soul’s great business upon Him and He is our All in All! Besides, there is this sweet thought, that He is our Representative. Know you not that of old He was our Covenant Head and stood for us in the great transactions of eternity? Like as the first Adam headed up the race and stood for us— alas, I must correct myself—fell for us, and we fell in him, so now has the second Adam taken up within Himself all His people and stood for them and kept for them the covenant. So that now it is ordered in all things and sure, and every blessing of it is infallibly secured to all the seed. Believers must and shall possess the covenanted inheritance because Jesus represents them and, on their behalf, has taken possession of the estate of God!

Whatever Christ is, His people are in Him. They were crucified in Him; they were dead in Him; they were buried in Him; they are risen in Him! In Him they live eternally, in Him they sit gloriously at the right hand of God, “who has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” In Him we are “accepted in the Beloved,” both now and forever! And this, I say, is the essence of the whole Gospel. He that preaches Christ preaches the Gospel! He who does not preach Christ, preaches not the Gospel. It is no more possible for there to be a Gospel without Christ than a day without the sun, or a river without water, or a living man without a head, or a quickened human body without a soul! No, Christ Himself is the life, soul, substance and essence of the mystery of the Gospel of God. Christ, Himself, I say again, and no other!

I have been trying to think what we would do if our Lord were gone. Suppose that a man has heard of a great physician who understands his complaint? He has traveled a great many miles to see this celebrated doctor. But when he gets to the door they tell him that he is out. “Well,” he says, “then I must wait till he is in.” “You need not wait,” they reply, “his assistant is at home.” The suffering man, who has been often disappointed, answers, “I do not care about his assistant. I want to see the man, himself—mine is a desperate case, but I have heard that this physician has cured the like. I must, therefore, see him. No assistants for me.” “Well,” they say, “he is out, but there are his books. You can see his books.” “Thank you,” he says, “I cannot be content with his books. I need the living man and nothing less. It is to him that I must speak and from him I will receive instructions.”

“Do you see that cabinet?” “Yes.” “It is full of his medicines.” The sick man answers, “I dare say they are very good, but they are of no use to me without the doctor. I want their owner to prescribe for me, or I shall die of my disease.” “But see,” cries one, “here is a person who has been cured by him, a man of great experience, who has been present at many remarkable operations. Go into the inquiry room with him and he will tell you all about the mode of cure.” The afflicted man answers, “I am much obliged to you, but all your talk only makes me long the more to see the doctor. I came to see him, and I am not going to be put off with anything else. I must see the man, himself, for myself. He has made my disease a specialty. He knows how to handle my case and I will stay till I see him.”

Now, dear Friends, if you are seeking Christ, imitate this sick man or else you will miss the mark altogether! Never be put off with books, or conversations. Be not content with Christian people talking to you, or preachers preaching to you, or the Bible being read to you, or prayers being offered for you. Anything short of Jesus will leave you short of salvation! You have to reach Christ and touch Christ, and nothing short of this will serve your turn. Picture the case of the prodigal son when he went home. Suppose, when he reached the house, the elder brother had come to meet him? I must make a supposition that the elder brother had sweetened himself and made himself amiable—and then I hear him say, “Come in, Brother. Welcome home!”

But I see the returning one stand there with tears in his eyes and I hear him lament, “I want to see my father. I must tell him that I have sinned and done evil in his sight.” An old servant whispers, “Master John, I am glad to see you back. Be happy, for all the servants are rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice. It is true your father will not see you, but he has ordered the fatted calf to be killed for you. And here is the best robe, and a ring, and shoes for your feet, and we are told to put them on you.” All this would not content the poor penitent! I think I hear him cry—“I do not despise anything my father gives me, for I am not worthy to be as his hired servant. But what is all this unless I see his face and know that he forgives me? There is no taste in the feast, no glitter in the ring, no fitness in the shoes, no beauty in the robe unless I can see my father and can be reconciled to him.”

Do you not see that in the case of the prodigal son the great matter was to get his head into his father’s bosom and there to sob out, “Father, I have sinned”? The one thing necessary was the kiss of free forgiveness, the touch of those dear, warm, loving lips, which said, “My dear child, I love you and your faults are blotted out.” That was the thing that gave his soul rest and perfect peace! And this is the mystery we come to preach to you—God Himself drawing near to you in Christ Jesus and forgiving you all your trespasses. We are not content to preach unless Jesus Himself is the theme. We do not set before you something about Christ, nor something that belongs to Christ, nor something proclaimed by Christ, nor somebody that has known Christ, nor some truth which extols Christ! No, we preach Christ Crucified!

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord! And we say to you, never be content till you clasp the Savior in your arms as Simeon did in the Temple. That venerable saint did not pray to depart in peace while he only saw the Child in Mary’s bosom! But when he had taken the dear One into his own arms, then he said, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.” A personal grasp of a personal Christ, even though we only know Him as an Infant, fills the heart to the fullest, but nothing else will do it! I go a little farther. As it must be Christ Himself, and none other, it must also be Christ Himself rather than anything which Christ gives.

I was thinking, the other day, how different Christ is from all the friends and helpers that we have. They bring us good things, but Jesus gives us Himself. He does not merely give us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, but He Himself is made of God all these things to us! Hence we can never do without Him. When very ill, you are pleased to see the doctor, but when you are getting well you say to yourself, “I shall be glad to see the back of the good man, for that will be a sure sign that I am off the sick list.” Ah, but when Jesus heals a soul, he wants to see Jesus more than ever! Our longing for the constant company of our Lord is the sign that we are getting well! He who longs for Jesus to abide with Him, forever, is healed of his plague! We never outgrow Christ—we only grow to hunger more and more!

If you eat a meal you lose your appetite, but if you feed upon Christ, you hunger and thirst still more after Him. This insatiable desire after Him is not a painful hunger, but a heavenly, pleasant hunger which grows upon you the more its cravings are gratified. The man who has little of Christ can do with little of Christ. But he that gets more of Christ pines for a yet fuller supply. Suppose a wise man were to instruct you? You would learn all he had to teach and then say, “Let him go on and teach somebody else.” But when Jesus teaches, we discover so much of our own ignorance that we would gladly keep Him as our life-tutor! When our Lord taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He opened the Scriptures and He opened their minds until their hearts burned within them! What next? Shall the Divine teacher pass on? No, no! They constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us; it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” The more He taught them, the more they wished to be taught!

This is always the way with Christ—He is growingly dear, increasingly necessary! Oh my Brothers and Sisters, you cannot do without Him! If you have your foot upon the threshold of pure gold and your finger on the latch of the gate of pearl, you now need Christ more than ever! I feel persuaded that you are of Rutherford’s mind, when he cried to have his heart enlarged till it was as big as Heaven, that he might hold all Christ within it—and then he felt that even then is was too narrow a space for the boundless love of Jesus, since the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him! And so he cried out for a heart as large as seven heavens, that he might entertain the Well-Beloved. Truly, I am content with what God has given me in all points, except that I long for more of Christ! I could sit down happy if I knew that my portion in the house and in the field would never grow—but I am famished to have more of my Lord!

The more we are filled within of Christ, the more we feel our own natural emptiness! The more we know of Him, the more we long to know Him! Paul, writing to the Philippians, when he had been a Christian for many years, yet says, “That I may know Him.” Oh, Paul, do you not know Christ yet? “Yes,” he says, “and no.” For he knew the love of Christ, but felt that it surpassed all knowledge. “All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full”—this is not our case in one respect, and yet it is in another, for all the streams of Grace and love and blessedness flow into our souls and we are full—yet, being full, we are longing for more! Not Your gifts, Lord, but Yourself! You, You are the desire of our hearts! Christ alone is enough.

Mark this. Nothing must be placed with Christ as if it were necessary to Him. Some hold a candle to the sun by preaching Christ and man’s philosophy, or their own priestcraft. When the blessed rain comes fresh from Heaven, they would gladly perfume it with their own dainty extract of fancy. As for God’s blessed air, fresh from the eternal hills, they dream that it cannot be right unless by scientific experiments they load it with their own smoke and clouds! Come, clear out, let us see the sun! We do not need your rush lights. Away with your gauges and your fineries! Let the clear sunlight enter! Let the holy water drop from Heaven! We want not your scented essences. Out of the way and let the fresh air blow about us. There is nothing like it for the health and strength of the soul! We rejoice in Christ and nothing else but Christ! Christ and no priestcraft! Christ and no philosophy! Christ and no modern thought! Christ and no human perfection! Christ, the whole of Christ, and nothing else but Christ—here lies the mystery of the Gospel of the Grace of God!

Brethren, what else but Christ can satisfy the justice of God? Look around you when a sense of sin is on you and the dread tribunal is before your eyes—what can you bring, by way of expiation, but Christ? What can you bring with Christ? What dare you associate with His blood and merits? Oh, my God, nothing will content You but Your Son, Your Son, alone! What else can quiet conscience? Some professors have consciences as good us new, for they have never been used. But he that has once had his conscience thoroughly exercised and pressed upon with all the weight of sin till he has felt as if it were better for him not to be than to be guilty before God—that man acknowledges that nothing but Christ will ever quiet his agonized heart!

See the bleeding Lamb and you will be pacified! See the exalted Lord pleading His righteousness before the Throne of God and conscience is even as a weaned child—and all the storm within the spirit is hushed into a great calm. What else will do to live with but Christ? I do not find, in times of pain and depression of spirit, that I can keep up upon anything but my Lord. The mind can feed at other times on pretty kickshaws and fine confectionery such as certain divines serve out in the form of orations and essays and the like, but when you are sorely sick, your soul abhors all manner of earthly meat and nothing will stay in the stomach but the Bread of Heaven, even the blessed Christ of God! Think also, when you come to die, what else will do but Christ? Oh, I have seen men die with Heaven in their eyes, the eternal Godhead seeming to transfigure them because they rejoiced in Christ! But a deathbed without Christ—it is the darkening twilight of eternal night! It is the gloomy cave which forms the entrance of the land of darkness.

Do not venture on life or death without Jesus, I implore you. “None but Christ, none but Christ”—this has been the martyr’s cry amidst the fire— let it be ours in life and death.

II. Secondly, we are to consider THE SWEETNESS OF THIS MYSTERY, WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU. This is a grand advance. I know that there are a great many fishermen here, this morning, and I heartily welcome them. When you are out at sea you like to know that there are plenty of fish in the sea all round your boats. It is a fine thing to get in among the great shoals of fish. Yes, but there is one thing better than that! Fish in the sea are good, but the fish in the boat are the fish for you! Once get them in the net, or better still, safe into the vessel, and you are glad. Now Christ in Heaven—Christ free to poor sinners is precious—but Christ here in the heart is most precious of all! Here is the marrow and fatness. Christ on board the vessel brings safety and calm. Christ in your house, Christ in your heart, Christ in you—that is the cream of the matter, the honey of the honeycomb!

Gold is valuable, but men think more of a pound in their pockets than of huge ingots in the bank vault. A loaf of bread is a fine thing, but if we could not eat it, and so get it within us, we might die of starvation. A medicine may be a noble cure, but if it is always kept in the vial and we never take a draught from it, what good will it do us? Christ is best known when He is Christ in you. Let us talk about that a little. Christ in you—that is, first, Christ accepted by faith. Is it not a wonderful thing that Christ Jesus should ever enter into a man? Yes, but I will tell you something more wonderful, and that is, that He should enter in by so narrow an opening as our little faith! There is the sun—I do not know how many thousands of times the sun is bigger than the earth, and yet the sun can come into a little room or a close cell—and what is more, the sun can get in through a chink!

When the shutters have been closed I have known him come in through a little round hole in them. So Christ can come in through a little faith—a mere chink of confidence. If you are such a poor Believer that you can hardly think of assurance or confidence, yet if you trust the Lord, as surely us the sun comes in by a narrow crack, so will Christ come into your soul by the smallest opening of true faith! How wise it will be on your part, when you see your Lord’s sunny face shining through the lattices, to say, “I am not going to be satisfied with these mere glints and gleams, I would rather walk in the light of His Countenance. Pull up those blinds! Let the heavenly sun shine in and let me rejoice in its glory.” Grow in faith and enlarge your receiving power till you take in Christ into your inmost soul by the Holy Spirit, for it is Christ in you by faith that becomes the hope of glory.

By Christ in you we mean Christ possessed. You see, nothing is so much a man’s own as that which is within him. Do you tell me that a certain slice of bread is not mine and that I have no right to it? But I have eaten it and you may bring a lawsuit against me about that bread if you like, but you cannot get it away from me! That question is settled—that which I have eaten is mine. In this case, possession is not only nine points of the law, but all the points. When a man gets Christ into Him, the devil himself cannot win a suit against him to recover Christ, for that matter is settled beyond question. Christ in you is yours, indeed! Men may question whether an acre of land or a house belongs to me, but the meat I ate yesterday is not a case of property which Chancery or any other court can alter. So, when the Believer has Christ in him, the Law has no more to say! The enclosure made by faith carries its own title deeds within it.

It means, too, Christ experienced in all His power. There may be a valuable medicine that works like magic to expel a man’s pains and cure his diseases, but it is of no efficacy till it is within him! When it commences to purify his blood and to strengthen his frame, he is in a fair way to know it without depending upon the witness of others. Get Christ in you curing your sin, Christ in you filling your soul with love to virtue and holiness, bathing your heart in comfort and refining it with heavenly inspirations— then will you know the Lord! Christ believed in, Christ possessed, Christ experienced, Christ in you—this is worth a world! Moreover, Christ in us is Christ reigning. It reminds me of Mr. Bunyan’s picture of Mansoul, when the Prince Immanuel laid siege to it and Diabolus, from within the city, strove to keep Him out.

It was a hard time for Mansoul, then, but, at last, the battering rams had broken down the gates and the silver trumpets sounded and the Prince’s captains entered! Then the Prince, Himself, did ride down the city’s streets, while liberated citizens welcomed Him with all their hearts, hung out all their streamers and made the Church towers ring again! The bells rang out merry peals, for the King, Himself, was come. Up to the castle of the heart, He rode in triumph and took His royal throne to be henceforth the sole lord and king of the city. Christ in you is a right royal word! Christ swaying His scepter from the center of your being, over every power and faculty, desire and resolve, bringing every thought into captivity to Himself—oh, this is glory begun and the sure pledge of Heaven!

Oh for more of the imperial sovereignty of Jesus! It is our liberty to be absolutely under His sway. Yes, and then Christ in you is Christ filling you. It is wonderful, when Christ once enters into a soul, how, by degrees, He occupies the whole of it. Did you ever hear the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing else but weeds, till at last he met with a strange foreign flower of singular vitality? The story is that he sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden and left it to work its own sweet way. He slept and rose and knew not how the seed was growing till one day he opened the gate and saw a scene which astounded him. He knew that the seed would produce a dainty flower and he looked for it. But he had little dreamed that the plant would cover the whole garden! So it was—the flower had exterminated every weed, till, as he looked from one end to the other—from wall to wall he could see nothing but the fair colors of that rare plant and smell nothing but its delicious perfume.

Christ is that plant of renown! If He is sown in the soil of your soul, He will gradually eat out the roots of all evil weeds and poisonous plants, till over all your nature there shall be Christ in you! God grant we may realize the picture in our own hearts, and then we shall be in Paradise! It may sound strange to add that Christ in you transfigures the man till he becomes like Christ, Himself. You thrust a bar of cold, black iron into the fire and keep it there till the fire enters into it. Look, the iron is like fire, itself—he that feels it will know no difference. The fire has permeated the iron and made it a fiery mass. I should like to have seen that bush in Horeb before which Moses took off his shoes. When it was all ablaze it seemed no longer a bush, but a mass of fire, a furnace of pure flame. The fire had transfigured the bush. So it is with us when Christ enters into us—He elevates us to a nobler state, even as Paul said—“I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.”

Jesus sanctifies us wholly—spirit, soul, and body—and takes us to dwell with Him in the perfect state above. Christ in you—how can I explain it? We are the little graft and He is the strong and living stem. We are laid to Him, bound to Him, sealed to Him—and when there is nothing between the new shoot and the old tree, at last the sap flows into the graft and graft and the tree are one! You know right well how Christ enters into us and becomes our life. Christ in you means power in you. A strong man armed keeps his house till a stronger than he comes—and when the stronger enters, the first tenant is ejected by the power of the new comer and kept out by the same means. We were without strength till Christ came, but now we war with principalities and powers and win the victory. Christ in you! Oh, what bliss! What joy! The Bridegroom is with us and we cannot fast! The King is with us and we are glad!

When King Charles went to live at Newmarket, it is said that a most poverty-stricken village became a wealthy place. Truly, when Christ comes to dwell in our hearts, our spiritual poverty suddenly turns to blessed wealth. Christ in you! What a wonder it is that He should deign to come under our roof! Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in. See the honor which His entrance brings with it! He glorifies the place where His foot rests even for a moment. If Jesus does but enter into your heart, His court comes within Him—honor, glory, immortality, Heaven and all other Divine things follow where He leads. “Oh,” says one, “I wish He would come and dwell in me.” Then, be humble, for He loves to dwell with him that is humble and of a contrite spirit.

Next, be clean, for if they must be clean that bear God’s vessels, much more they that have Christ, Himself, in them. Next, be empty, for Christ will not live amid the lumber of self, pride and carnal sufficiency. Learn abundantly to rejoice in Christ, for he who welcomes Christ will have Him always for a guest. Jesus never tarries where He is not desired. If His welcome is worn out, away He goes. Oh, desire and delight in Him! Hunger and thirst after Him, for Christ delights to dwell with an eager people, a hungry people, a people who value Him and cannot be happy without Him. Surely I have said enough to make you feel that the sweetness of true godliness lies in having Christ in you.

III. Thirdly, we are to consider that the OUTLOOK OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY. Last Sunday morning, as best I could in my feebleness, I spoke to you about the time when this earthly house of our tabernacle shall be dissolved, when we shall find that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. But this morning’s text goes a little further—it speaks of glory which is a hope for soul as well as body. Why glory! Glory? Surely that belongs only to God. To Him alone be glory! Yes, but Christ has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.”

And He also says, “And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them.” Think of it! Glory for us poor creatures! Glory for you, Sister! Glory for me! It seems a strange thing that a sinner should ever have anything to do with glory when he deserves nothing but shame. We are neither kings nor princes, what have we to do with glory? Yet glory is to be our dwelling, glory our light, glory our crown, glory our song! The Lord will not be content to give us less than glory. Grace is very sweet, but might we not be content to swim forever in a sea of Grace? But no, our Lord “will give Grace and glory.”—

*“All needful Grace will God bestow,*

*And crown that Grace with glory, too.”*  
We shall have glorified bodies, glorious companions, a glorious reward and glorious rest!

But how do we know that we shall have glory? Why, first, He that has come to live in our hearts and reigns as our bosom’s Lord, makes us glorious by His coming! His rest is glorious—the place of His feet is glorious—He must mean some great thing towards us, or He would never dwell in us. I saw a line carriage stopping, the other day, at a very humble hovel, and I thought to myself—“that carriage is not stopping there to collect rent, or to borrow a broom.” Oh, no, that lady, yonder, is calling round and visiting the poor, and I doubt not she has taken in some nourishment to an invalid. I hope it was so. And I am sure my Lord Jesus Christ’s carriage never stops at my door to get anything out of me! Whenever He comes, He brings countless blessings with Him. Such a one as He is, God over all, blessed forever—it cannot be that He took our nature, unless with high designs of unsearchable love!

Thus we nourish large expectations upon the food of solid reason. I am sure our Lord Jesus would never have done so much if He had not meant to manifest the immeasurable breadth and length of a love which is beyond imagining. What He has done, already, surprises me even to amazement. I think nothing can appear strange or hard to believe, let Him do what He may in the future. If the Scriptures tell me my Lord is going to fill me with His own glory and to set me at His own right hand, I believe it. He who went to the Cross for me will never be ashamed of me. He who gave me Himself will give me all Heaven and more! He that opened His very heart to find blood and water to wash me in—how shall He keep back even His kingdom from me?

O sweet Lord Jesus, You are, indeed, to us the hope, the pledge, the guarantee of glory! Friend, do you not feel that Christ in you is the dawn of Heaven? Besides this, Christ is He that has entered into covenant with God to bring His people home to glory. He has pledged Himself to bring every sheep of His flock safe to His Father’s right hand and He will keep His engagement, for He never failed one Covenant promise yet. Moreover, this we do know, that the Christ who is come to live with us will never be separated from us. If He had not meant to stay, He would not have entered our heart at all. There was nothing to tempt Him to come, and if, in Sovereign Grace, He deigned to live in the poor cottage of our nature, then, Brothers and Sisters, He knew what He was doing. He had counted the cost, He had foreseen all the evil that would be in us and about us, and when He came, He come with the intent to stay.

Someone asked another, the other day, “What persuasion are you of?” And the answer was, “I am persuaded that neither life, nor death nor things present, nor things to come shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Are not you of that persuasion, Brother? If so, you can see how Christ in you is the hope of glory. Why, look, Sirs, Christ in you is glory! Did we not show that just now? “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!” You have Heaven in having Christ, for Christ is the biggest part of Heaven! Is not Christ the soul of Heaven, and having Him you have glory? What is more, having gotten Christ, Christ’s glory and your glory are wrapped up together.

If Christ were to lose you, it would be a great loss to you, but a greater loss to Him. If I can perish with Christ in me, I shall certainly be a fearful loser, but so will He, for where is His honor, where His glory if a Believer perishes? His glory is gone if one soul that trusts in Him is ever cast away. Comfort yourselves with this word—Christ in you means you in glory, as surely us God lives! There is no question about that! Go your ways and rejoice in Christ Jesus and let men see who it is that lives in you! Let Jesus speak through your mouth, weep through your eyes and smile through your face! Let Him work with your hands and walk within your feet, and be tender with your heart. Let Him seek sinners through you! Let Him comfort saints through you until the day breaks and the shadows flee away!

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÷Col 1.28

PERFECTION IN CHRIST  
NO. 2581

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 31, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE YEAR 1856.

**“Perfect in Christ Jesus.”***Col 1:28***.**

Perfection in Jesus Christ! What effect ought it to have upon our hearts if it really is ours? Perfection! What do we know of it from Scripture? We know that it is a word so large that while it takes us little time to say it, yet it comprehends all words within its meaning. There is no good word of any description which can be applied to any creature but this word, perfection, takes it in. And though it is easy to utter it with our lips, I question whether there is any mortal mind capable of grasping the idea of perfection any more than it can grasp the idea of eternity! When we begin to think of eternity—without beginning, without end—we are lost in trying to comprehend it because we are finite. And when we once endeavor to conceive perfection—without fault, without flaw—we are lost because we are imperfect! And therefore we cannot understand perfection any more than the finite can grasp the infinite! Perfection, indeed, seems to be the sole prerogative of God. He is perfect in everything. In all His attributes there is no lack. From whatever point of view we regard Him, He is without blot or blemish. And no man, speaking truthfully of God, can say that there is anything of imperfection in Him. If we speak of majesty, His Glory is unsurpassed. If we talk of power, His is Omnipotence and that, indeed, is infinite power! If we speak of wisdom, His is the wisdom of the Godhead—He knows all things, from the most minute to the most immense. He comprehends all secrets and grasps all knowledge in His mighty mind.

It does seem, at first sight, as if perfection could belong only to the Creator. But we remember that the works of God are also perfect and so are all His ways. When He made the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, He looked upon them and said, “They are very good.” Written on the face of Nature, there was then this one word, Perfection! All God’s works were perfect, without a flaw—the great Artificer completed all His workmanship and left nothing undone. There was no rough and crude matter which He had not formed—there was no substance He touched which He did not turn into the gold of perfectness. All things were good, yes, very good—all were perfect!

There is one thing on earth, even now, which is perfect. Albeit that perfection was blasted by the Fall and ever since the Garden of Eden was devastated by the sin of man, perfection has gone, yet there is one thing on earth which we possess which is perfect. You all know what that is—it is the perfect will of God contained in the Sacred Scriptures. He who would be able to spell perfection in mortal language must read the Bible through, for he will find it perfect in all its parts—perfectly true, perfectly free from all error, perfect in everything that is necessary for man to know, perfect in all that can guide us to bliss, perfect in all that can warn us of dangers on the road. There is still something of perfection left here, but when we come to look within, where is perfection then, Beloved?

I shall not stop to prove the depravity of mankind, I will not talk much about the fall of Adam, how it injured us and destroyed the perfection of our nature, but I would ask this simple question of you—Do you not feel in your own souls that perfection is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? And though there are times when you are striving to be like Christ and seeking to serve Him, yet in the very striving and seeking you forget that you must live wholly on Christ, that you must trust Him as well in your duties to sanctify them as in your sins to forgive them! And then you begin to set up a perfection of your own, although you have so often had a view of your own heart that you ought not, for a moment, dream of any perfection there! Without making it a doctrine, I simply state it as a fact which you will not deny—that in you, that is, in your flesh—there is not only imperfection—but there dwells no good thing. Honestly, from the depths of your soul, you must confess that whether Adam lost perfection or not, whether you ever had perfection when you were born or not—it is not to be found in you—not in your conduct, conversation, or life! You only wish it were there. Daily experience makes you bemoan the lack of it. Every tear that trickles from your eyes say, “Imperfection.” Every sigh which comes from your heart says, “Imperfection.” Every harsh word which proceeds from your lips says, “Imperfection.” And every duty which is not done with the most holy, strict and rigid observance of God’s Law cries out, “Imperfection!” You sit down, like the captive daughter of Zion, and confess that the crown of perfection is gone from your head and departed from your heart. Guilty you must lie before God, for perfection is not in you.

But, then, while speaking of the Doctrine of Perfection, we must remember that, according to the sacred oracles, perfection is absolutely necessary for all who hope to enter Heaven! We may have lost perfection, but that does not alter God’s demand for it. It may be impossible that we should ever be perfect in ourselves, but God demands that we should be perfect. The holy Law was given by God and if we wish to be saved by it, we must keep it perfectly—no man who is not perfect can ever hope to enter Heaven! Unless he can find perfection somewhere—in another, if not in himself—He must be irretrievably ruined and driven from God’s Presence. No man under the sun can ever walk the starry plains of Heaven, or tread the golden streets of bliss until he gets perfection somehow or other! Let me tell you why.

First of all, it would be unjust of God if He did not punish man if he is not perfect. God required of all men, originally, that they should keep His entire Law. Now, if a man is not perfect, it stands to reason that he must have broken God’s Law, otherwise he would be perfect. Having broken it, God has said, “I will punish sin. ‘The soul that sins, it shall die.’” And— with reverence to the Most High God, we say it—if He does not punish every sin, He is not a just God. If He does not exact the punishment for every transgression, there is a blot upon His escutcheon—the whiteness of His Throne is tinged with stains and He is no longer that awfully, severely just God we have considered Him to be! I tell you, Man, the very Nature of God demands that you should be punished if you are not perfect! If but one sin has been committed by you, you have broken the tablets of God’s Commandments and you are guilty of breaking them all! Ah, but it is not merely one sin that you have committed, but ten thousand times ten thousand! You are far from perfection and unless you can get perfection somewhere—in Christ, or in yourself—you are lost beyond all hope of remedy, for perfection God must have, as a just God, or else He must punish you for your sin!

Moreover, remember that we must be perfect or else we shall never be fit companions for those who are perfect in spirit and stand before the Throne of God. Are not the angels perfect? Has sin ever stained their purity? Once, it is true, “There was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven.” But now the spirits before God’s Throne are spotless and pure even as God is. Has God any stain on Him? Will any dare to say there is imperfection in Him? No, God and the angels are perfect—and would men be fit companions for angels and God if they had imperfections? If men should have sin when they come to die, would they be fit to live with those spirits who know no sin and in whose breasts there has been no guile? Could I hold acquaintance and familiar converse with the man whose lips are always guilty of profane swearing? Could I live in peace with the man whose character is not akin to my own conduct? And, surely, there is not so much difference between me and my fellow creatures, here, as between the sinner and his God. No, my Friend, unless you get perfection somewhere—in Christ, or somewhere else—you cannot go to Heaven! You must have perfection, for God has declared that nothing that defiles shall in any way enter the gates of Paradise—

*“Those holy gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin and shame.”*

None but those washed whiter than snow and as pure as the Almighty can hope to be companions of the Deity and co-heirs with the celestial spirits. You must have perfection if you would enter Heaven—this is evident not only from the Nature of God, but from the holiness of Heaven itself! Otherwise you would be unfit to enter and you would not be happy if you were there.

“Where, then, is perfection to be found?” cries the poor sinner. We find a multitude of persons ready to tell us, “Here is perfection,” or, “There is perfection.” The ceremonialist says, “I will give you perfection! Here it is— you shall, in your infancy, have sacred drops fall upon your forehead and hallowed words shall be pronounced over you—and you shall be regenerated! In your later years, you shall kneel before the sacred table and the bishop’s hands shall be solemnly laid upon your head, and you shall take the sacramental bread and wine. And when you come to die, the priest shall sit by your side and he shall give you, in your last expiring moment, some drops of goodly cheer called wine, and a piece of bread, and these shall be your passport to Heaven—and so you shall be perfect!” Ah, poor ceremonialist, you will find yourself mightily mistaken and much deceived! Like a dream when one awakes, God will scatter all the baseless fabric of your hands—all that you have done and all those pretty garments you have woven shall be torn sunder and cast into the fire—and you shall stand naked before Him!

Then comes the speculative perfectionist. He tells you that you must believe in Jesus Christ and then, by a rigid system of devotion and constantly observing religious duties, you will attain to three or four stages. You will get, in the first place, to justification, then to sanctification and go on, by degree, until you will be perfectly sanctified and come to the highest degree men can have in the body. I have met with some of these “perfectly sanctified” gentlemen, but I could have spoiled their perfection simply by treading on their corns—and I believe I have done so, for they have seemed to be immensely cross when I have denied their proud boast! I have heard of a particularly perfect man who came to John Betridge one morning. The quaint and honest minister treated him very rudely, whereupon the man turned round at once and began to speak all manner of evil words. John said to him, “Pretty perfection was yours, that I could spoil in so easy a manner!” You will always find those socalled “perfection” gentlemen far from perfect. I would not trust the man who called himself, “perfect,” in anything whatever, for he that says he has no sin is a liar, and the Truth of God is not in him. He that says he is perfect, mistakes God’s Word and knows not himself.

Where, then, is perfection to be found? The text tells us that all Christians are perfect in Christ Jesus, that the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty are perfect in Christ Jesus. Let me try to explain the meaning of this perfection in Christ.

I. First, consider HOW GOD’S PEOPLE ARE “IN CHRIST.” I remark, first, they are, all of them, in Christ in the Covenant of Election. When God chose His people, He did not choose them one by one, separately, but He chose Christ and all His people were chosen in Him. Just as when I select an acorn, I select all the unborn forests slumbering in that acorn cup, so, when God chose Jesus, He chose all the people that were in Him, all whom Christ had taken to Himself by an eternal union and had made one with His own Person.  
Secondly, the chosen ones are also all in Christ by redemption. When Jesus died, each one of us who believe in Jesus died in Him. And when He suffered, we suffered in Christ. Our sins were laid on Christ’s head and now, Christ’s merits are laid on us. Christ made an atonement for the sins of all His elect through the shedding of His blood upon the Cross. We were in Him when He died. We were in Him when they laid Him in the grave. We were in Him when He rose and led captivity captive. And we are in Him now!

Thirdly, we are in the Lord Jesus Christ actually, positively and, to our own knowledge, when we believe in Him. It is then, when faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, that we become consciously in Christ! We were in Christ before, but we did not know it. We were made secure in Jesus from before the foundation of the world, but we did not know it—we had no evidence of it whatever. We were like a man who is underage—the possessions of his father, or those which have been left to him when he turns twenty-one, are positively his, but he cannot touch them until he comes of age. So, all the possessions of the Covenant belong to the elect even before they believe, but they cannot touch them until the appointed time comes when, by Sovereign Grace, they believe. A man who has not attained his majority cannot get much comfort from what he is to have when he comes to full age. He cannot live on it. He cannot be supported by it. So, the Christian cannot feed on what he has not received. When we have faith, then we come into our inheritance! The moment we believe, we have attained full age—we are no longer under tutors, governors and schoolmasters, but we are brought to Christ—we are of perfect age and then we are said to be “in Christ.” The moment a sinner believes, then he is “in Christ” and no man whatever has any right to make any pretense that he is in Christ until he believes—until he has surrendered himself to Christ, until he has given himself to Jesus to be saved by Him—to serve Him, to live for Him and, at last, to die in Him and live with Him forever!

II. The doctrine of our text is THAT EVERY MAN WHO IS “IN CHRIST” IS PERFECT.  
Does not this startle us? The majesty of our text demands someone who could discourse with eloquence. Yes, it needs an angel to proclaim its glorious meaning! Believers are, in Christ, perfect—every one of them! He is a new-born child of God! It may be only ten minutes since he put his faith in Jesus Christ. Before that time he had been a drunk, a swearer, a blasphemer. But yet I tell you, if that man has really believed and is in Christ, he is perfect in Christ! There is another man who has been a backslider. Once he walked in God’s ways, but he has been suffered to wander from the faith. Now God is bringing him back. He is laying hold on him and the man is weeping, repenting and crying out! His bones are broken through the fall, his soul is sore and sick, even unto death! Look at him as he stands with tears of penitence coursing down his cheeks! I tell you, that man, backslider though he may have been— though he has sinned even as David did—is perfect in the Person of Christ!  
There is another, a gray-headed old man. Long has he fought his Master’s battles—he has received many a wound and scar—and the troubles and trials of this mortal life have greatly weakened him. If you ask him whether he is perfect, he tells you, “No, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, by nature I feel diseased. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” He disclaims all righteousness of his own, all trust in himself, all hope out of Christ. I tell you, that old man is perfect in Christ! I care not what may be his frailties, what may be his weaknesses—he is perfect in Christ! And then, O Christian, what though your sins are many, what though infirmities beset you, though you have a hasty temper and, perhaps, the lusts of the flesh sometimes rise—and only preventing Grace saves you from going astray—what though evil thoughts cross your mind and today you are bemoaning your sad case and crying out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—I tell you, Christian, you are complete in Him, you are perfect in Christ Jesus! Having been washed in His blood, clothed with His righteousness, united to His Person, you are, this moment, perfect in Him!  
There is one passage in Solomon’s Song which once flashed in my mind with great brilliancy when I was reading that blessed Canticle. It says, “You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you.” That is Jesus Christ talking to His Church. She says, “I am black, because the sun has looked upon me.” She acknowledges her own imperfections and her lack of beauty, but Jesus Christ says, “You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you.” Looking at His Church from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet, He sees not a blemish because she is in Him! She does not stand in herself. Her divisions and the sins of her members and of her ministers are sore blemishes if you look at her with the eye of the world, or with the eyes of Christians—but if you look at her in Christ, all her blemishes are gone—she is covered with a robe that makes her shine like a queen! Though her old garments may have been those of beggary and ruin, she now has the garments of majesty and light. “You are complete in Him,” yes, you are “perfect in Christ Jesus.”  
I think it would be very hard to make some who are the Lord’s people believe this. Some of you are drudging on in bondage because you do not completely understand Justification by Faith. And I believe that the great fault of the ministry of our day is that complete justification in the Person of Jesus Christ is not preached in all its length and breadth. Because there are some ministers who, while preaching it, say things which have a tendency to lead men to licentiousness, therefore we are forbidden to say anything at all about it. But, Beloved, I am sure that all I can say to you about our perfection in Christ will never lead a Christian to licentiousness, for, because he is “perfect in Christ,” he will long to be more like Christ! And he will seek more and more, day by day, to have the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon him to keep him from sin.  
Many go to Arminians and semi-Calvinists to hear this, that and the other. They have all kinds of divinity conglomerated into one—little bits of Pelagianism tacked on to small scraps of Arminianism, these hooked on to Calvinism and that, again, joined to Socinianism—all sorts of strange combinations mixed up into one curious medley for them to drink! Whereas they need, instead of that, the pure unadulterated milk of God’s Word in the shape of the doctrinal preaching of Justification by Faith!  
How are we justified? That is the question for us to answer. Are we justified by works, or by Grace? Every true Christian says, “We are justified by faith. By Grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.” Well then, if we are saved by faith in Christ, can we be said to be saved by works? If I had no good works at this moment, and if I have faith, am I not as completely justified as though I had ten thousand good works? I know, if I am justified by faith, good works will always follow, but good works will never merit justification. They are the handmaidens, not the mistress! Faith in Christ is the foundation, the cornerstone and top stone of justification. Good works are evidences of justification—they have nothing to do with procuring it. The poor thief who died, having been hardly able to do a good work, went to Heaven just as surely as the man shall who lives 80 years in the service of his Master! It is not anything in myself that saves me—it is Christ alone. If I feel myself the most loathsome of all creatures, even though I hate and abhor myself, yet if I know I have faith in Christ—if I have cast myself on His atoning Sacrifice, He has not altered though I have—He is as perfect as ever, in Him there is no sin! And therefore I, standing in HIM, am perfect this moment notwithstanding all my corruptions and frailties!  
III. Now I come very briefly to consider THE INFLUENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE of Perfection in Christ when it is realized in the heart.  
I know that at the outset, some will say that this doctrine, stated so broadly, must necessarily lead persons to imagine that good works are of little service. I ask them, if they ever read any of Luther’s writings, whether they have noticed how broadly he speaks concerning good works and the righteousness of the flesh? If they have read his writings, they will find that, as a Protestant and a follower of Luther, I have not overstepped the mark. And if they will turn to the Epistle to the Romans they will see how Paul declares, “And if by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then it is no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work.” If they will read the other Epistles, they will see that I might have said even more upon this theme. I deny that this doctrine has any tendency to lead men to sin. I can speak for myself, so far as my own life is concerned, I always find myself most holy when I know myself to be most unholy. I can live most like Jesus when I live most on Jesus and most out of myself. When I say, “I must live on Christ alone, I must rest solely on Him for salvation and believe that, however unworthy, I am saved in Jesus,” then there rises up, as a motive for gratitude, this thought, “Will I not live wholly to Christ? Will I not love Him and serve Him, seeing that I am saved by His merits?” That is the strongest tie to virtue and the greatest bond to a holy life.  
Then let me tell you the next effect of this doctrine. It gives a Christian the greatest calm, quiet, ease and peace. How often are the saints of God downcast and sad! They ought not to be so. I do not think they would be if they could always see their perfection in Christ. I know you have your, “corruption men,” who always preach corruption and nothing else, telling you about the depravity of the heart and the innate evil of the soul. I like to read their works and to hear them—but I like to go a little further and to remember that I am “perfect in Christ Jesus.” I do not wonder that those men who always dwell upon corruption should look so sad and seem so miserable. But I think, if a man could always see his perfection in Christ, he would be happy. What if distresses afflict me? I am perfect in Christ! Though Satan assaults me, I am perfect in Christ Jesus! Though there are many things to be done before I get to Heaven, those are done for me in the Covenant of Divine Grace! There is nothing needed—Christ has done it all.”—  
*“‘It is finished!’  
Hear the dying Savior cry.”*  
And if it is finished, then am I complete in Him and can “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”  
Poor Christian, you are perfect in Christ! Tried Christian, you are perfect in Jesus! If the Holy Spirit does but apply this Truth of God to your soul, if you were in the very caverns of the ocean, it would be enough to carry you up to the stars for joy, to think that you are perfect in Christ! There are some who are conscious that they have no perfection, but are covered with sin from head to foot. There is a poor wretch who has crept into this Chapel, tonight, and has felt that he would crawl down a mouse hole or stay in any corner of the building if he might but hear the sermon. He felt it was too hallowed a place for him to sit down—he was almost ashamed to stand in the company of the saints, he believed himself to be such an unworthy sinner. I tell you, Friend, if you are a poor, stripped, law-condemned sinner, you shall yet be able to see yourself “perfect in Christ Jesus.” Man, does not this make your ears tingle? Does not your heart leap for joy at the very thought of it? Black with sin as you are, you shall be white one day! Filthy as you are, you shall yet be cleansed! Evil as you are, you shall be made good! Yes, however enormous your transgressions, however black your crimes—you may even have been a murderer—Christ’s blood can wash the blood off your hands! You may have been a thief, but Jesus Christ restored that which He took not away, and He will forgive even your sins. You may be the vilest one that ever disgraced this earth—you may be a walking nuisance in the very streets—yet I tell you, if you believe in Jesus Christ this night, you shall go away perfectly clean! Oh, it is marvelous, this salvation! Christ takes a worm and transforms it into an angel! Christ takes a filthy thing and makes it into a cherub! Christ takes a black and deformed thing and makes it clean and matchless in its glory, peerless in its beauty—and fit to be the companion of seraphs!  
O my Soul, stand and admire this blessed doctrine of Perfection in Christ Jesus! Though you should become more pure and pure every day, yet perfection would still be beyond you. The heights say perfection is not in them! The depths say, “Perfection is not here!” The caverns in the heart of the earth tell us, “Perfection is not in us.” Perfection is in the Person of Jesus Christ, alone! O Christian, think of this! The robes of Jesus are put on you! The royal crown Christ Jesus wore is now, in God’s eyes, on your head! The robe of azure which once He had upon His shoulders is now on yours! His silver sandals are yours! The golden zone, His belt of Glory, is yours! The matchless purity of His sinless life is yours! Everything that Christ has is yours—you are perfect in Him— there is nothing you can want which He cannot give you! If you go to His storehouse with a large list of your needs, saying, “I need this,” or, “I need that,” it is all there! And more than you will ever need is there. Do you want sanctification? It is there! Do you want redemption? It is there! Do you want strengthening Grace? It is there! Do you want preservation? It is there! Man, are you standing, tonight, poor, naked, blind, miserable, desponding? I say—Be not so foolish as to remain in all your poverty and wretchedness when you may be rich! Why, Christian, are you now poor, ragged, stripped? Do you see the hole in that wall? It has a mark upon it in the shape of a cross. I will lend you the key called, “Promise.” Go, insert it in the keyhole, and when you open it, whatever you need you shall find. First, there is a bath of gold—in it you shall be washed and become white as snow! Further on there hangs a robe and though you are now naked, you shall put it on. There is a crown for you to wear and there is everything else you can want. If you need bread, you shall find it, for it is said, “Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.” If you need comfort, it is there, for Christ is “the consolation of Israel.” If you need forgiveness, it is there. All things are wrapped up in Christ!  
This morning my eyes were dazzled when I saw the Queen’s plate. I am not much of a believer in the Queen’s plate, or anybody else’s plate, but when I saw things of so much value—the precious jewels that sparkled here and there—I wondered at their amazing costliness and could not guess how much they would come to if they were all sold and the money given to the poor—which I rather felt inclined to wish they might be. But if I were once to get to see all the riches of Christ could I tell you how large His riches are—I would have to hold up my hands in astonishment and say, as I took up one mercy after another, “This is a golden mercy— how much is it worth?” I would be unable to tell you the value of any one of them! “Ah,” the angels would say, “Do not try to estimate these precious things, for they had to be bought with Christ’s blood. And until you know the price of Divine blood, you cannot tell the value of these mercies.”  
Now, to wind up my discourse, let me enquire who of you can take to yourselves this blessed doctrine? How many of you are “perfect in Christ Jesus?” Some man says, “I think I am perfect in myself. I am as respectable a gentleman as anybody living and I am not going to be insulted by any of your nonsense! I am at least as good as other people and, perhaps, rather better. And I think if Heaven does not go by favor, I most certainly shall get in, for I feel myself to be very good and righteous.” Then hear the voice of Jesus—“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like unto whited sepulchers which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness. Even so you, also, outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within, you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” “Verily I say unto you that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.”  
Another says, “Perfect in Christ Jesus? No, Sir, that I am not. I know I have no interest in the blood of Christ and if I were to say I had, it would be a barefaced lie—and my conscience would cry out against me. There is something in my heart which would forbid my lips to say it.” Then, pray, do not say it, dear Heart, for I would not have you speak what is not true. If you feel that you have not any interest in Christ, say so to your own souls. It is best for you to look the matter in the face. You say you do not know that Christ died for you. You say you are sure that you will sink into eternal torments if you die tonight. Well, take that thought home to your heart and, for half-an-hour think it over—“I am out of Christ. I am a condemned sinner and if I were to die, I feel I should sink into Hell.” Do not be afraid of the thought. Do not be like the man who says, “I will not have that thought anymore,” but be honest with yourselves. What is the good of cheating yourselves? Deal fairly with your own souls. It never does a man any hurt to examine his books and see if his accounts are all right. If he is a bankrupt, he will not lose anything by knowing it—if he is insolvent, he will get no richer by hiding it from himself. You may say, “It is true, I am a lost and condemned sinner.” Well, the thought will bring you to your knees and you will cry, “O God, give me an interest in Jesus Christ!” And that mighty God who always hears prayer, will save you and you shall go on your way rejoicing and triumphing in Christ!  
Then there is one who, when I ask the question, “Are you perfect in Christ Jesus?” will reply, “Ah, I trust I am! By humble faith I lay my hand on the head of Jesus and I know that I stand perfect in Him.” Then, my Brother, give me your heart, let us shake hearts tonight! Oh, it is a sweet brotherhood, the brotherhood of the perfect in Christ Jesus! You are perfect in Him—then, my Brothers and Sisters, wipe those tears away—you are perfect in Christ! Do you know what yon poor sinner says? He says, “O Lord, if I could say that, I would not care about health, I would not care whether I was in poverty, or whether I was rich.” He thinks, if he only knew himself to be “perfect in Christ,” he would never be miserable as long as he lived. Then why, Beloved, are you down in your spirits while you are “perfect in Christ?” Why do you lie on the ground? It is time for you to take your harp from the willows, if you are “perfect in Christ.” I can see no room for sadness! Suppose that you are going to a poor house where you have not a bit of fire? Never mind, you can say, “I am perfect in Jesus.” Perhaps you will scarcely know where the next meal will come from—let this thought cheer you, “Perfect in Jesus.”  
Though the wind may come and blow between the rags that cover you, if you can say, “I am perfect in Jesus,” you can be content with poverty! Though you are in pain and tossing about in your bed, if you can say, “I am perfect in Jesus,” it will be like medicine to soothe your spirits! And when grim Death appears, you only need look him in the face and say, “Perfect in Jesus,” and in that moment Death will change into an angel, pain will be turned into bliss and sorrow into immortal Glory! God give all of us to realize that we are perfect in Jesus, in Jesus only, in Jesus forever! Bless His precious name! Hallelujah to His Person, glory to His Grace! Seraphs, sing out His praises! Cherubs, take up the note! You rocks, you hills, burst forth into song! All you Christians, sing praises to Him who loved us with an everlasting love and who will carry us safely home to Glory to be with Him forever and ever!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**Isaiah 55**

Verse 1. Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Let no one ask whether he may come to Christ for salvation—he is bid to come! Whoever wills to come is welcome. “Ho!” says God, as men cry when they have goods to sell and would attract the passerby. And not merely to one does He speak, but to everyone—“Ho! Everyone who thirsts”—whatever is the age he lives in and to whatever age he may, himself, have attained “Ho! Everyone who thirsts.” But is there anything to be had by those who come? There is in God exactly that which every soul needs! First, “waters” for the thirsty. There is even more than absolute necessities—“wine and milk,” God has an abundance of Grace, yes, a superabundance! He can give us all we need and even more than we desire. Oh, turn not away when God the Father cries, “Ho!”

2 *.*Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not? Listen diligently to Me and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Apart from God, there is nothing for us but destruction. We may spend our money and our labor, too, but happiness is not to be found by the creature apart from the Creator, or by a sinner apart from the Savior. God has so constituted the human mind that it cannot be perfect without Him.

3 *.*Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live. It seems a very little thing to do, does it not? Simply to hear—to incline the ear—yet that is the way of salvation. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Alas, nowadays the mass of men will not hear God’s message of mercy—they pass it by as if it were an old worn-out tale of which they knew quite enough! Hear, then, what God says to His poor forgetful creature—“Hear, and your soul shall live.”

3 *.*And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Will God make a covenant with man? Can it be that He will strike hands with sinful man and enter into league and compact with him? Yes, so He says. If men will but incline their ear and come to Him, He will enter into covenant with them. “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” “But David is dead,” says someone. Yes, I know he is, but the David, here meant, always lives—it is Jesus, the Son of God!

4 *.*Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Jesus Christ is the people’s Witness and Leader. Born among them, living among them, dying for them, living still to save them—and God declares that He gives this Christ to such as hear Him, to such as incline their ear and come unto Him.

5 *.*Behold, you shall call a nation that you know not and nations that knew you not shall run unto you because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you. Brothers and Sisters, our Lord Jesus Christ did not die in vain. He died to redeem His chosen people and those whom He redeemed, He will certainly have. Even though some reject Him, others will not. God has power over human hearts and where Christ’s Gospel is faithfully preached and attended by the Holy Spirit’s power, sinners must come to Christ! Their will shall sweetly yield to the supremacy of love. Even though they set themselves against Christ, yet they shall come when the Lord draws them! And Glory shall be gotten for His holy name by the salvation of those who never even thought of being saved!

6 *.*Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. “Seek the Lord while He may be found.” That is, NOW. “Call upon Him while He is near.” He is near now! Wherever Christ is lifted up and His Gospel is proclaimed, there He is according to His promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

7 *.*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. What a grand word that is! “He will abundantly pardon.” However abundant sin may be, God’s pardon is still more abundant! As Paul puts it, “Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” Sin may be like the great mountains, but the mercy of God is like Noah’s flood that rose above the tops of the highest hills! “He will abundantly pardon.”

8 *.*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD. Oh, what a mercy it is to be taught to think God’s thoughts and to be led in God’s ways! It is the entrance into a new life! It is something infinitely beyond the greatest elevation to which any ordinary life can ever reach by its own unaided power!

9-12. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from Heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth good and bad, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. “For you”—that is, you who have heard God’s Word and believed it—“you shall go out with joy.” Happy hearts help to make a happy world! He who has found his Savior, received God’s pardon and learned God’s thoughts, shall find the whole world full of music to him, wherever he may be!

13 *.*Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Wherever God’s Grace begins to work, it cuts up thorns and thistles—and plants in place of them fir trees and myrtle trees. Oh, that His Grace might renew each one of us! And, then, when that blessed work has been done, may we never cease to glorify that dear name by the power of which we have been changed!

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÷Col 1.29

WORK IN US AND WORK BY US.

NO. 914

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 6TH, 1870,  
***BY C. H. SPURGEON,***AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” —* **[Col 1:29](tw://bible.*?id=51.1.29|_AUTODETECT_|)***.*

**THE apostle Paul could very truthfully assert that he labored and agonised. When the Holy Spirit had anointed the apostles, they all became ardent enthusiasts for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Having the whole world committed to them that they might enlighten it, they labored most ardently each one in his sphere to spread abroad the truth of the gospel; but the apostle of the Gentiles labored more abundantly than they all. Into how many countries did he carry the testimony of Christ! How often did he cross the sea, traverse mountains, and ford rivers! One sees in his career something more than an ordinary Christian life; he was so indefatigable in service, that surely nothing beyond could have been possible to humanity, even under the help of God. His public labors were not only abundant, but they were the cause of continual inward conflict. He never preached a sermon, wrote epistle, or attempted a work, without earnest prayer and soul-consuming zeal. Night and day with tears, he said of a certain church that he had labored for its good. He was a man so whole hearted and intense in all that he did, that we ought to remember not merely the amount of his labors, but the way in which he wore out himself by the intensity of his zeal in them. Probably never man led a more intensely ardent life than be. Moreover, added to all this, he carried a weight of care enough to crush him; for there came upon him the care of all the churches — to plant them, to defend them against rising errors, to prevent schisms from dividing the flock, to lead in the converts from grace to grace, to instruct them, and to present every one perfect before God. The burden resting upon the apostle was greater than the cares of all empire; and then, as if to complete the whole, he was called to suffer persecutions of which he has given us a list, which as we read it makes us shudder that one man should have endured so much, and makes us also glory in humanity that it should be possible that so much should be borne and done for God by a single individual.**

**Yet, note it well, the apostle takes no honor to himself, but humbly ascribes whatever he had done or suffered entirely to his Lord. He declares that he labored and agonised, but he confesses that it was through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who mightily by the Holy Spirit wrought in him. In another place, when he had mentioned his abundant labors, he added, “Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” He remembered where to put the crown; he took care not to steal an atom of the glory for himself, but he ascribed all to the power of him who loved him and gave himself for him. Let us imitate the apostle in these two things. My brethren, let us live, while we live, a life of energy, but let us at the same time confess, when we have done all, that we are uprofitable servants; and if there be any glory and any praise resulting from the work which we achieve, let us be careful to lay it all at the Redeemer’s feet.**

**The doctrine of the text upon which I intend to preach, this morning, as I may be enabled, is this, it is clear from what Paul has here said that the work of Christ in us and for us does not exempt as from work and service, nor does the Holy Spirit’s work supersede human effort, but rather excites it. Paul speaks of an inner work, a mighty work wrought in him, but he also declares, “whereunto I also labor, striving.” So that the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is not intended in any degree to lull our minds into sloth, but wherever the Holy Spirit works he makes men work; he worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, that we also may work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. I shall try to illustrate this truth in the two respects, first, in reference to a man’s own salvation; and secondly, in the matter of the Christian man’s ministry for the salvation of others. The work of the Holy Spirit does not supersede Christian effort in either case.**

I. First, then, IN THE BELIEVER’S SALVATION.

**We believe, each one of us, and we have scriptural warrant for it, that if any man be saved, the work within his soul is entirely wrought by the Holy Ghost. Man is dead in sin, and the dead cannot raise themselves from the grave. Quickening and spiritual resurrection must be accomplished by divine power. Man musk be born again, and this birth must be effected by divine power, for unless a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. As the commencement of salvation is dependent upon the Holy Spirit, so is the carrying of it on. “Without me ye can do nothing,” is Christ’s testimony. We shall never persevere except as grace shall keep us from falling, nor may we hope to be presented faultless before the august presence except as the Holy Spirit shall sanctify us from day to day, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. I trust, my brethren, I need not do more than assert this doctrine in your hearing, since you know how continually we insist upon it, and our trumpet never gives an uncertain sound as to the great truth that God worketh all our works in us, and that salvation is of the Lord from first to last. But at this present we intend to insist upon this further truth, that the working of the Holy Spirit in us does not exempt the believer from the most energetic labor, but rather necessitates his doing all that lieth in him.**

**To enforce this we remark, first, that the Christian life is always described as a thing of energy. Sometimes we read of it as a pilgrimage. That master allegorist, John Bunyan, has not pictured Christian as carried to heaven while asleep in an easy chair. He makes Christian lose his burden at the cross-foot, he ascribes the deliverance of the mart from the burden of his sin entirely to the Lord Jesus, but he represents him as climbing the Hill Difficulty; ay, and on his hands and knees too, Christian has to descend into the Valley of Humiliation, and to tread that dangerous pathway through the gloomy horrors of the Shadow of Death. He has to be urgently watchful to keep himself from sleeping in the Enchanted Ground. Nowhere is be delivered from the necessities incident to the way, for even at the last he fords the black river, and struggles with its terrible billows. Effort is used all the way through, and you that are pilgrims to the skies will find it to be no allegory, but a real matter of fact; your soul must gird up her loins; you need your pilgrim’s staff and armor, and you must foot it all the way to heaven, contending with giants, fighting with lions, and combating Apollyon, himself.**

**Our life is in Scripture represented as a race which is even sterner work than pilgrimage. In such foot-races as were witnessed among the Greeks, in every case the man spent all the strength there was in him, and underwent a training beforehand, that he might be fit for the contest. It sometimes happened, and indeed not seldom, that men fell dead at the winning-post, through their extreme exertions. Running to heaven is such running as that, we are to strain every nerve. We shall require all the power we have, and more in order to win that incorruptible crown which now glitters before the eye of our faith. If we are so to run that we may obtain, we shall have no energy to spare, but shall spend it all in our heavenly course.**

**Not unfrequently the apostle compares our spiritual life to a boxing match, and the terms in the original Greek if they were translated into pure vernacular English, would remind us very much of a boxing ring and of the place where wrestlers strive for the mastery. To wit, in that notable passage, “I keep under my body,” we are told by scholars that the Greek word alludes to the getting of the antagonist’s head under the arm, and dealing it heavy blows. So the flesh must be mortified. Now the wrestlers in the Greek and Roman games strained every muscle and sinew, there was no part of the body that was not brought into action to overthrow their adversary. For this they agonised till often blood would spurt from the nostrils, and veins would burst. Such in a spiritual sense must be the agony of a Christian if he is to overcome temptation, and subdue the power of sin. Ah brethren! it is no child’s play to win heaven. Saved, as I repeat it, through the power of Christ’s blood and with the energy of his Holy Spirit within us, yet we have no time to loiter, no space in which to trifle; we must labor, striving according to his working who worketh in us mightily. All the figures which represent the Christian life imply the most energetic exertion.**

**Secondly, be it remarked that there is no illustration used in Scripture to set forth the heavenly life, which allows the supposition that in any case heaven is won by sloth. I do not remember ever finding in Scripture the life of the Christian described as a slumber. To the sluggard I find a warning always; thorns and thistles in his garden, and rags and disease in his person. “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.” There may be occasional opportunities by which even idle men may become wealthy, but such spiritual wealth I have never heard of. I find that wherever the Spirit of God comes upon men, it never leaves a saved man effortless or fruitless, but as soon as it descends upon him, according to his capacity he begins to work out his own salvation. Remember the question of the inspired writer, “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” Her faith saved her; and though it was very weak and very ignorant faith, it made her work, and therefore she hid the spies to save their lives. Look at the dying thief, with his hands and feet fastened to the wood, and ready to expire, yet he rebuked the reviling malefactor. thus doing all he possibly could for his Lord, in whom he trusted for salvation, what more could he have done? It maybe said of him, “He hath done what he could.” It shall be well if as much can be said for us. No, brethren, you cannot be carried to heaven on “flowery beds of ease.” You must fight if you would reign, you must stem the flood, you must breast the waves if you mean to reach the further shore. Grace will help you, else were the work an impossibility; but even with the aid of grace you are not permitted to slumber into glory, nor sleep your way to the celestial throne. You must be up and doing, watching diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God. The trumpet sounds, and not the dulcimer, the call is to conflict, not to feasting.**

**I would next bid you note, dear friends, that it is natural it should be so; it is unavoidable in the nature of things, that when the Holy Spirit comes he should not beget a spirit of slumber, but awaken us to diligent action. It is natural, I say, because one of the first results of the Holy Spirit’s entrance into a man’s heart is to let him see his sin and his danger. If I feel myself guilty, and perceive that God is angry with me, and that I shall be cast byand-by into the lake of fire, what is the inevitable result? Shall I not hear a voice crying, “Escape for thy life! Look not behind thee! Stay not in all the plain”? Wherever the Holy Ghost works a sense of sin, the sinner is constrained to cry, “What must I do to be saved?” Never does the Spirit effectually show a man his sin, and then leave him to fold his arms and ask for “a little more sleep and a little more slumber.” No, the awakened soul exclaims, “I am guilty, I am accursed of God. How can I escape? Lord help me, help me now to find rest if rest is to be found!” Then the Holy Spirit farther reveals to us the excellence of the salvation of Christ, the happiness of those who rest in Jesus, the future reward of such as serve God on earth. And what is the result? The enlightened soul cries, “I fain would find this pearl of great price, I fain would be enriched by an interest in Christ, I too, would, with the blessed, take my everlasting heritage.” See you not then that the Holy Ghost cannot make a man appreciate salvation without at the same time creating a desire to gain it, out of which arises prayer for the promised blessing? After a man has found Christ to the pardon of his sin, the Holy Spirit is pleased to endear Christ more and more to him. It is the office of the spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Now, my brethren, you know very well that whenever you have a sight of the preciousness of Christ, you are moved at once to glorify him. Do you not cry —**

*“Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break,  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Savior’s praises speak”?*

**I know it is so. It is because we think so little of Christ that we do so little for him; but when Christ is brought with vivid power home to the mind, then at once we cry, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” and we bestir ourselves to honor him.**

**Brethren, the fact that the Holy Spirit is working in a man, never can be a reason for his not working; on the contrary, the moment a man perceives that the Spirit is helping him, he is encouraged diligently to labor. “Why,” saith he, “my work may fail, but if it be the Spirit’s work it cannot fail.” I bow my knee in prayer, and if I believe that all acceptable prayer is wrought in me by the Holy Spirit, I am fully assured that God will not refuse to grant what he himself by his Spirit suggests to me to ask. If the Holy One of Israel himself breaks my heart and leads me to long after a Savior, surely he does not intend to tantalise me; be will continue his work till he has saved me. Thus encouraged, a man is certain to give diligence to make his calling and election sure. Moreover every intelligent man feels that if he does not work when the Spirit of God is working in him, he is dishonoring that Divine Person, and is running the solemn peril of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven him. He feels that if he should be slothful that text would condemn him, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Neglect, mere neglect, nobody ever gets to heaven by it; but ah, how many perish by that alone!**

**To conclude this point, it is most certain that all saving acts must be performed by the man himself. Faith is the gift of God, but the Holy Ghost never believed for anybody; it is not his office to believe. The sinner must believe. Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Ghost never repented. What had he to repent of? He has done no ill. It cannot be possible for him to repent for us. Nay, we ourselves must repent. My brethren, this is self-evident to every candid mind. There must be in every man a personal faith, and a personal repentance; and though these are wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, yet they are his own acts; they cannot be the acts of anybody else, or else the man has not believed, and has not repented, and there is no life in him. Right on to the end of the Christian life all those acts which bring us into communion with God are our own. For instance, the Holy Ghost helps men to pray. He helps their infirmities. But they pray; they themselves pray. Prove to me that the man does not himself pray, and I will be bold to tell you that he is not saved. The intercession of Christ is prevalent, but it will not save those who live and die without praying for themselves. True desires after God must be your own desires. The desire is wrought in you, but still it is yours. And the expression of that desire is helped by the teaching of the Spirit, but still it is your own expression, or else what are you but a dead soul? There must be a voluntary putting forth on your part of the life which is quickened in you by the Spirit. This is so plain as to be self-evident.**

**Note again, if we were not made active, but are simply acted on by the Holy Ghost, there is a reduction of manhood to materialism. If the man does not believe nor pray, and if spiritual acts are not a man’s own acts, but the acts of another in him, then what is the man? There is no moral good or moral evil in a work which is not my own — I mean no moral good or evil to me. A work which I do not myself perform may be creditable or discreditable to somebody else, it is neither to me. Take an illustration. In the Square of St. Mark, at Venice, at certain hours the bell of the clock is struck by two bronze figures as large as life, wielding hammers. Now, nobody ever thought of presenting thanks to those bronze men for the diligence with which they have struck the hours; of course, they cannot help it, they are wrought upon by machinery, and they strike the hours from necessity. Some years ago a stranger was upon the top of the tower, and incautiously went too near one of these bronze men; his time was come to strike the hour, he knocked the stranger from the battlement of the tower and killed him; nobody said the bronze man ought to be hanged; nobody ever laid it to his charge at all. There was no moral good or moral evil, because there was no will in the concern. It was not a moral act, because no mind and heart gave consent to it. Am I to believe that grace reduces men to this? I tell you, sirs, if you think to glorify the grace of God by such a theory, you know not what you do. To carve blocks, and move logs, is small glory, but this is the glory of God’s grace, that without violating the human will, he yet achieves his own purposes, and treating men as men, he conquers their hearts with love, and wins their affections by his grace.**

**I warn any here present, who imagine that man is a merely passive being in salvation, against putting their theory in practice. I am alarmed for you if you say, “God will save me if he so decrees, and therefore I will sit still and wait.” My hearer, I am afraid for you, you are neglecting the great salvation, and I again remind you of the warning: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation”? I confess, I have no hope for you. But on the contrary, if you cry, “Lord, save, or I perish,” I have good hope of you, you shall not perish: the Spirit of God is working in you these desires and this longing and seeking. Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. I pray you check not your aspirations. Quench not the Spirit. Led and guided by his mighty working, come to the foot of Christ’s cross; trust alone to him, and a voice shall sound in your heart, “Thy sins which are many, are all forgiven thee.” God grant it may be so.**

II. We shall now turn to the second part of our subject, in reference to

**THE MINISTRY OF THE SAINTS FOR THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS.**

**The Holy Spirit alone can convert a soul. All the ministries in the world put together, be they what they may, are utterly powerless for the salvation of a single soul apart from the Holy Ghost. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.” But wherever the Holy Spirit works, as a general rule (so general that I scarcely know an exception), it is in connection with the earnest efforts of Christian men. This is clear, first, from the example of the text. The apostle Paul certifies that the salvation of souls is the sole work of Christ, but he declares that he labored, and the next word he adds “striving,” or as in the Greek, “agonising.” Though the Spirit did the work, it was in connection with the apostle’s labor and agony for souls. Now, my brethren, laboring implies abundant work. No man can be said to labor who only does half an hour’s work in a day. A man who is a thorough laborer makes long hours, and is ever at it. The apostle Paul was this. The winning of souls was not a piece of by-play with him; it was his one object, to which he consecrated everything. He was “in labors more abundant.” In the morning he sowed his seed, and in the evening he withhold not his hand. If we are to have souls saved we must do the same. No tradesman expects his shop to prosper who has it open only one hour a day, and you must not expect to be soul-winners if you only now and then seek to be such. There must be, as far as time and capacity allow, the consecration of yourselves to this work, even to an abundance of effort.**

**Labour, again, means hard work. It is not trifling. He is no laborer who takes the spade to play with it as a little child upon the sand. He that labors works till the sweat streams from his face; and he that would win souls will find that, though it is all of the Holy Spirit, yet it involves on his part the sternest form of spiritual work. Baxter used to say if any minister found his ministry easy, he would find it hard to answer for it at the day of judgment; and I add, if any one of you teaching in your classes, or officiating in any form of Christian work, find it easy, you will find it hard to give an account of your stewardship at the Lord’s coming.**

**The labor must be personal labor, for no man is a laborer who does it through his servants. He may be an employer, and in a certain sense he may be said to do the work, but he cannot say, “I labor.” The apostle performed personal work. Ah! brethren, the power of the church very much lies under God in the personal influence of her members. On this platform I feel that I am a long way off from you. I wish I could devise some mode of speech by which I could thrust my hand into your hearts and get my soul to pulsate close by yours to make you feel what I feel. Between the pulpit and the pew there is too often a great gulf fixed. But you who get your friends into the parlour, and talk concerning eternal things, you have a fine opportunity. Your personal influence then bears with mighty force upon the person with whom you are speaking, and you may hope that a blessing will be the result. Learn ye from your adversaries. What is the strength of the shavelings of Rome? What but their conversing with men and women by themselves at the confessional? Who could not prevail, with such an instrument? We, with nobler ends and aims, must use personal private intercourse in all honest earnestness to bring men to repentance, to faith, and to the foot of the cross.**

**My brethren, I do not believe that even this will suffice. Abundant Christian work, and hard Christian work, and personal Christian work, must have combined with it inward soul conflict. If your soul never breaks for another, you will not be the means of breaking that other’s heart; but when it comes to this, “I must have that soul saved, I cannot bear the thought that it should be cast away” — you are near winning that soul. Suppose it be your child, your unconverted husband, or your brother, and you are enabled to say in yourself, “I have continual heaviness for my kinsmen according to the flesh,” so that you could almost sacrifice your own soul if they might but be saved; when it comes to tears the Lord will not deny you. My brother, when your heart breaketh with love to souls, they shall be yours. But there must be conflicts. I pity that minister whose life is one of uninterrupted spiritual ease. What, can we see ye backslide and not weep till ye come back to the cross? Can I know that among these thousands who are listening to my voice, perhaps half are dead in trespasses and sins, and can I be insensible as a marble statue? Then God have mercy upon me as well as upon you! Unhappy souls to be entrusted to the care of one so utterly unfit for such a service. No, the heart must be stirred, there must be an anguishing and yearning for souls. They tell us that in the sea certain waves rise from the bottom, and these cause the ground swells and the breakers. There must be great ground swells of desire within us that souls may, by some means, be delivered from the wrath to come; and where these deep heart-searchings are found there must be conversions. Where these four things, of which we have spoken, are the result of the Holy Ghost working in any of you, it is as certain that souls will be saved as that spring will follow when the sun returns from his southern tropic.**

**We must further note that this is plain from the work itself. For, brethren, souls are not converted as a rule without previous prayer for them on the part of some one or other. Well, then, we must be stirred up to prayer, and the praying which God hears is not that of people half asleep. The petitions which pierce the ears of God are not those that fall from careless lips, they must come from your heart or they will never go to his heart. The importunate pleader prevails with heaven. Souls are saved instrumentally through teaching, but the teaching which saves souls is never cold, dead teaching. God may occasionally bless such words, for he doeth great wonders, but as a rule the teaching that convinces and enlightens is earnest and enthusiastic. We have heard of a traveler who, journeying onward, met with one who said, “Sir, the night is dark, and I should not advise you to go on to the river, for the bridge is broken in the middle, you will be in the stream before you know it.” This was said in so careless a tone that the traveler went on. He was met sometime afterwards, fortunately for him, by another who again warned him; “The bridge is broken! don’t go on, you will be sure to lose your life if you attempt it. You cannot ford the stream and the bridge is broken.” The traveler replied, “Why, I have been told that tale before, but the man who told me it spoke in such a tone that I could see through him, I knew it was all a hoax.” “Oh, but sir,” said the other,” it is true! I have but now escaped myself. I am sure it is true!” “But,” said the traveler, “I am not so easily seared.” “Well, then,” said the other, “I beseech you once again do not go on, for you will perish,” and rushing up to him he said, “I will not let you go.” He grasped him and held him fast. “Now,” said the other, “I believe you have spoken the truth, and I will turn with you.” So there are some who, warn souls of their danger in such a careless tone, that they create an unbelief which many an earnest tongue will not be able to dispel. But if you get hold of the soul and say to it, “I will not let thee perish;” if you say to your friends as Whitfield would say to his congregation, “If you perish is shall not he for want of praying for, it shall not be for want of weeping over; if you are damned it shall not be because my heart was cold towards you,” you will win them, they will be led to believe from your earnestness. Who knows how many your earnest spirit may bring to Jesus? Praying and teaching if effectual must be earnest, and hence when the Spirit comes to save the sons of men he always gives us earnest praying men and earnest teachers.**

**But, brethren, teaching is not all. We must come to persuasion with men, and that persuasion must be very persevering. Certain men we must dog day after day with our entreaties. Some souls will not come with one invitation, they must therefore be plied with many. I remember a minister who went to see a dying laborer, and the man growled from his bed, “Tell him to begone — I want none of the like of him to disturb me.” He called again, and received the same rude answer. He called again, and went halfway up the stairs; he heard an oath, and would not intrude. He continued to call till he had numbered twenty times, and the twenty-first time the man said, “Well, as you are so set on it, you may come in,” and he did go in, and that soul was won for God. Humanly speaking where had that man been but for persevering zeal? When the Lord means to save men by you, he will give you perseverance in seeking them, he will work in you mightily by his Spirit; you will feel a determination, that twist and turn as they may with indefatigable earnestness of self-destruction, you will still pursue them if by any means you may prevent their everlasting misery.**

**Earnest zeal is a natural result of the Holy Spirit’s working upon the souls of men. Whenever the Spirit of God comes, he sanctifies in men the natural instinct which leads them to wish others to be like themselves. Whether a man be bad or good, he seeks to make others like himself; the Holy Ghost lays hold of this, and constrains Christians to desire to bring others to their state of mind. This done, he arouses in the Christian mind the commendable principle of love to our fellow men. Having experienced the blessedness of salvation for ourselves, we desire to see others enjoying like happiness. The patriot’s bosom glows with the same passion as before, but now it is refined and purified, and he prays for his nation that not only it may be free, but that the Spirit of God may make it free indeed.**

**The Holy Spirit bestirs in us the impulse of gratitude, “Has Christ saved me?” then the man exclaims, “I will live for him; The Spirit gives impetus to that suggestion, and we resolve that since Jesus has loved us so, we will give to him all that we are, and all that we have.**

**In addition to this, the Holy Spirit sanctifies many other natural emotions, such for instance as that which we sometimes call the esprit de corps, by which men are moved to desire the prosperity of the community to which they belong. The Holy Spirit makes us feel one with Christ’s church, and we ardently desire her success. A holy emulation as to which shall serve the Master most runs through our ranks, not that we may get honor, but that we may honor him. We cannot endure it that our brethren should go to the war and we sit still. We begin to be afraid lest the denunciation should go forth against us, “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Inspired by such feelings we rush to the fight that we may rescue souls for Christ.**

**Then the Spirit in some men, I pray it may be in your case, my dear friends, sheds abroad the love of Christ at such a rate that the soul is all on fire to exalt Christ. Nay, in some he has made this sacred passion to eat them up till they have been consumed with holy zeal. Like men inspired, like ancient apostles, certain choice spirits have lived the life of Christ on earth with an awful vehemence of enthusiasm. Wherever such men are raised up, God is about to save souls. Whenever you listen to a man who is carried away by an all-consuming desire for the glory of God, you may conclude that he is the instrument of God to thousands; his lips shall feed many, he shall be the spiritual progenitor of tribes of believers. Thus where the Spirit of God comes, energy is evinced and souls are saved; but we do not find it otherwise.**

**I would have you notice, once more, that the whole history of the church confirms what I have stated. When the Holy Spirit descended, there were two signs of his presence; the one was a rushing mighty wind, the other was the tongue of fire. Now if the Holy Spirit intended to do all the work himself, without using us as earnest instruments, the first emblem would have been stagnant air; and the next might have been a mass of ice, or what you will, but certainly not the tongue of fire. The first emblem was not only wind, but it was a mighty wind, and not only that, but a rushing mighty wind, as if to show us that he intended to set every spiritual sail in the most rapid motion; and as birds are drifted before the gale, so would he impel his people forward with his mighty influences. The other emblem was fire, a consuming, devouring, imperial element. May we be baptised in the Holy Ghost, and in fire, so shall we know what is meant by the symbol. Our Lord’s commencement of the gospel ministry was signalised by vehemence. Here is his own experience, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Christ’s ministry and life were notably earnest, he was clad with zeal as with a cloak. His apostles also were men so vehement, that in their earliest deliverances they were thought to be drunken with wine. Every era of the church’s prosperity has been marked by this same holy violence. Hear Chrysostom speak, he is no player upon a goodly instrument, he gives forth no dulcet tones for gentle ears. Listen to his denunciation of the Empress Eudoxia! Hear how he denounces the sins of the times! How vehemently he calls upon men to escape for their lives because of coming judgment! Listen to Augustine, his vehement tones you will not soon forget. Turn to the notable era of the Reformation. The men who wrought the Reformation were no dullards, no men of polite speech, of elegant chillinesses and dainty sentences. Luther was a type of them all, vehement to the extreme of vehemence. I say not that their natural violence was the power which wrought the Reformation, but that the Holy Ghost made their hearts vehement, and so they wrought marvels. And we, dear brethren, if we are to see in these days a genuine revival of religion, worthy of the name, must return to the old enthusiasm which once made the church fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. O that we may live to see it, and the Lord’s name shall be glorified!**

**The conclusion of the whole matter is just this. Let us combine the two things of which we have spoken. Dear brethren, let us rely upon the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost only. Let us not go a warfare at our own charges. Let us believe that without the Lord nothing good can be done. But let us rest assured that Jesus is never absent where he gives the spirit of prayer, as he has given to this church; and that he never deserts those to whom he vouchsafes holy zeal for his kingdom, such as he has bestowed on many here present. Let us be encouraged by his presence. Gideon, when he obtained the token of the fleece wet with dew, and when by night he heard the story of the barley cake that overturned the tents of Midian, did not straightway go to his home and renounce the enterprise, because God was with him. No, but on the contrary, thus encouraged he gathered together his three hundred valiant men in the darkness of the night, they broke the pitchers, bade the torches shine, and shouted the watchword, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” Even so be it with us at this hour. Knowing that God the Holy Ghost is with us, let us lift the cry amid the midnight of our age, “The sword of the Lord and of his Son Jesus!” and we shall see what God will do, for he will surely put to flight the armies of the aliens, and get to himself renown.**

**But, brethren, let us combine with this confidence in the Holy Spirit, the most earnest effort on the part of every one to do all he can. I have a scene before my mind’s eye at this moment; I see in this church and neighborhood the counterpart of the mountain side when the multitude were fainting for lack of bread. They must be fed, Christ willed it. The disciples must bring their barley loaves and fishes-what were they among so many? Christ must break and multiply. The disciples must receive from his band, they must then go among the many, the fifties and the hundreds, and break the bread that Christ had blessed, for the hungry must be fed; not only men, but women and children must be satisfied. Behold, my brethren, this great city hungry and faint, and ready to die. Bring hither, all ye disciples of Christ, your loaves and fishes — I mean not to me but to the Master. What you have of ability, however slender, bring it out. Christ will not begin to multiply till you have brought forth all you have. Miracles are not to be expected till nature is brought to a nonplus. Bring out then, whatever of talent or grace you have, consecrate all to Jesus, and then as he begins to multiply stand ready as your master’s servants to wait upon the crowd; and if the push and clamor, yet weary not, break still the bread till, every soul shall have been supplied. Go on, go on, and do not say the toil is hard, it is so blessed to do good to others. It is thrice blessed, nay, sevenfold blessed, to turn a sinner from the error of his ways, and save a soul from death. Nay, weary not, though you have been so long at it that your spirit is faint. My brother, your physical frame is weary, but be of good cheer. Do ye not hear them? Hearken, I pray you! Up yonder, there are angels bending from their thrones, and I think I hear them say, “How blest a work to feed the hungry, and those men how honored to be permitted to hand round the Master’s precious gift! Do they not whisper, “We would fain be with them”? One bright spirit thinks he would exchange his crown with the meanest of the disciples, if he might share the service of gospel teaching. Might they not envy you; those blessed harpers upon the sea of glass, because you can do what they cannot; you can tell of Jesus, you can fetch in the prodigals, you can find the lost jewels for the Master’s crown!**

**I charge you, my brethren, by the living God, unless your religion be hypocrisy, help me this month, help ray brethren the elders and deacons, help us every one of you. By the blood that bought you, if ye be indeed redeemed; by the Holy Ghost that is in you, except ye be reprobates; by everything that God in lovingkindness has done for you, I charge you come to the help of the Master in this the hopeful hour. So may the Lord do unto you as you shall deal with us this day. If you shall indeed consecrate yourselves to him, and serve him, may he enrich you with the increase of God, and may the peace of God that passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds; but if ye refuse your service, the Lord shall judge you. He that knoweth his Master’s will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes**

**÷Col 2.6**

A CONSISTENT WALK FOR TIME TO COME  
NO. 3030

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, DURING THE YEAR 1864.

**“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”** *Col 2:6***.**

THOUGH the shepherd cares for the lambs and carries them in his arms, he does not cease his care when they become sheep. But, as long as they shall need to be tended, so long will he watch over them. Hence it is that our Apostle, though always quick of eye after newborn souls and abundantly anxious to bring sinners to a knowledge of the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, is equally in a conflict of soul for the spiritual healthfulness of those who have been born-again. Our text contains one of those loving admonitions. It is addressed, not to the ungodly, not to those who are strangers to our Lord and Master, but to those who have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Longing for their spiritual good and anxious that they should be established in the faith, he admonishes them thus, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”

In endeavoring, by God’s help, to speak upon this subject, we shall have three points. There is here, first, a fact stated concerning Believers— they have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Then there is an exhortation, or a counsel, offered to such—“walk in Him.” Besides which we have a model held up for our imitation. How are we to walk in Him? Why, just in the same way as we at first received Him! Let our first coming to Christ be to us the mirror of how we shall walk in Him all our days.

I. All true Christians are here described in the text as HAVING RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.  
The first point to which I would particularly direct your attention is the personality of this reception. Believers have, it is true, received Christ’s words. They prize every precept, they value every Doctrine, but this is not all. They have received Christ Himself. While they have received Christ’s ordinances and are not slow to walk in obedience to the things which He has commanded, they do not stay here. They have received Christ Himself—His Person, His Godhead and His Humanity. They have “received Christ Jesus the Lord.” And, mark you, there is a very great distinction here—and also a great mystery. A great distinction, I say, for there are some who do, I think, wholly believe the doctrines which Christ has taught, and are profoundly orthodox, full of an earnest controversial spirit for the faith once delivered to the saints and yet, for all that, they do not seem to have received Him, the very Christ of God! And, truly, there are many who have received both Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, yet, despite what any may say, we believe that they have not received Christ, but are still as great strangers to Him as though they had only passed through the rites common to mankind, or the rites in which heathens indulge! There is a vast difference between the outward reception of the Doctrine, or the ordinance, and the inward reception of Christ.  
We also said that herein is a mystery—such a mystery that only he who has received Christ can understand. The preacher cannot tell you what it is to receive Christ. Human language is not adapted to convey to the mind this deep enigma, this matchless secret. We know what it is, for “truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” We can describe it in such a measure that our friends who have also received Christ will know that we understand the mystery—but to the carnal mind it will always remain a puzzle how Christ can be “in us the hope of glory”—how we can eat His flesh and drink His blood. They run away to some carnal interpretation and suppose that the bread is turned into flesh at the Eucharist or that the wine is transformed into blood. That is carnal talk and this they talk because they know not what is the mystery of this receiving Christ and this walking in Christ.  
This much, however, we may affirm. The Believer has received Christ into his knowledge. He knows Him to be God and to be Man. He knows Him to be set forth of the Father as the Redeemer, but, he also knows Him by a personal acquaintance. His eyes have not seen Him and yet he has looked to Him and has, by faith, seen the King in His beauty! His hands have not handled Him and yet there has been a secret touch by which the virtue has come out of Christ and has flowed into him! He has never sat down at a Communion Table when Christ has been physically present and yet full often he could say, “He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love.” He has talked with me as a man talks with his friend and the strongest sense that can be attached to that sweet word, “communion,” is tame in reference to the Believer’s connection with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ! And in that sense of knowing Him, intimately knowing Him, the Believer has received Christ!  
Not only has he received Christ into his cognizance, but into his understanding. He understands, with all saints, the love of Jesus in its height, depth, length and breadth. He has so seen Christ as to understand of Him that He was before all time as the Ancient of Days and then had His delights with the sons of men in the great Covenant decree of electing love. He understands how He became made flesh with us—married to us—when He came on earth, the Son of Mary, “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.” He knows by experience what is the meaning of the Atonement. He can understand how Justice is satisfied and Grace magnified. Without confounding or making mistakes, he knows how God was always gracious and full of love and yet how Christ Jesus came that the love of God might be shed abroad in our hearts and we were reconciled unto God by His death. Hence the Christian does not read of Christ as though He were a mere historical personage, nor of His work as a great mystery which he cannot comprehend, but he has received Christ into his understanding!  
Ah, Beloved! This is a very poor and shallow sense compared with the next. I have received but one ounce of Christ into my understanding, but, bless His name, I have received the whole of Him into my affections. Good Rutherford used to pray for a larger heart, that he might hold more of Christ and, perhaps, you remember that strange extravaganza of prayer in which he says, “Oh, that I had a heart as deep, and wide, and high as Heaven, that I might hold Christ in it!” And then he said, “Since the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, oh, that I had a heart as vast as seven heavens, that I might get the whole of Christ into me and hold Him in my arms!” And truly, Christian, in one sense you have taken all of Christ into your soul, have you not? Do you not love Him—not a part of Him, but the whole of Him? I hope you can truly say to Christ— *“Have You a lamb in all Your flock  
I would disdain to feed?  
Have You a foe, before whose face  
I fear Your cause to plead?  
You know I love You, dearest Lord  
But oh, I long to soar  
Far from the sphere of mortal joys—  
And learn to love You more!”*  
We must not leave this part of the subject without adding that the Believer has received Christ into his trust, and this he did at his spiritual birth. He received Christ into the arms of his faith. He took Jesus Christ to be, henceforth, the unbuttressed pillar of his confidence, the one Rock of his salvation, his strong castle and high tower. And, in this sense, every soul that is saved has “received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
Our text seems to point to a threefold character in which we have received Christ. We have received Him as the Christ. My Soul, have you ever seen Him as the Father’s Anointed One—as the Chosen and Sent One, ordained of old—as One that is mighty, upon whom help should be laid? Have you seen Him as God’s great High Priest, ordained as was Aaron, chosen of God from among men? Have you looked upon Him as David did, as One chosen out of the people? We must accept Christ as the Anointed One and the right way to thus receive Him is to receive Him as the garments of Aaron received the oil that flowed from his head. Christ is the Anointed One and then you and I become anointed ones through the Holy Spirit which distils from Him to us—and so we receive Him as Christ.  
And then He is called, “Jesus,” and we must receive Him as the Savior. “You shall call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Justification is receiving Christ as Jesus. So is sanctification! Only I think I must say justification and pardon receive Christ as Jesus—and sanctification receives Him as Christ Jesus, both as the Anointed One and the Savior. May you and I be daily delivered from sin—the guilt and power of it—and so receive Him as Jesus!  
There is a peculiar emphasis about the next expression. The article is emphatic here, “Christ Jesus the Lord.” To me, if I receive Christ, He must be Lord—not one of the lords that may have dominion over me, but the Lord, peculiarly and specially. And though hitherto other lords have had dominion over me, now I am to obey Him and only Him. What do you say, professor? Have you received Christ Jesus the Lord? Is your will subject to His will? Do you desire only to act according to His bidding? Are His commands your desire? Is His will your will? Is He your Lord? For, mark you, you can never truly receive Him as Christ, or as Jesus, unless you receive Him as the Lord! Thus, another sense in which we receive Him is by subjecting ourselves entirely to Him, sitting at His feet, wearing His yoke, taking up His Cross and bearing His reproach.  
You will note that there is also, in this description of a Christian, the thought of his entire dependence. The Apostle does not say, “As you have therefore fought for and won or earned Christ Jesus,” but, “as you have therefore received Him.” It is a humbling word which divests the creature of everything like boasting! What is there to glory in if I am a receiver? The Apostle in another place says, “If you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?” The vessel that is filled under the flowing stream cannot boast, though it is ever so full, for it was naturally empty and owes its fullness to the stream. The beggar in the street, let him receive gold, yet cannot boast of the gold because he is a receiver. He who gave must have the honor of the benefaction—not the person who received! So let your faith be ever so strong, let your confidence in Christ be ever so glorious, you have nothing to boast of in it, for you have “received Christ Jesus.” Beloved, here is a test for us—is our religion a receiving religion, or is it a working and an earning religion? An earning religion sends souls to Hell! It is only a receiving religion that will take you to Heaven! You may tug and toil, and do your best and make yourselves, as you think, as holy as the best of the Apostles—but when you have done your utmost, you have done nothing whatever! You have built a house of cards which shall soon fall down. But when you come as an empty-handed sinner, having nothing of your own—and receive Christ Jesus—then you have bowed your will to God’s will. Or rather, Divine Grace has bowed it and you are saved according to the Lord’s own word, “He that believes on Me is not condemned.” Thus you have dependence connected with the personality of the Christian’s faith!  
We also have here certainty—“As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord.” Oh, how many Christians—I hope they are Christians—talk as if they really thought it was impossible to attain to any assurance of faith whatever! It is the fashion with some Christians to say, “Well, I hope,” and, “I trust”—and they have a notion that this is being very humbleminded. But to say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him,” is thought to be pride! The declaration of Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives,” or of the spouse in the Canticles, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His; He feeds among the lilies,” is thought to be vain presumption and boasting. But indeed, Beloved, it is no such thing! Doubting is pride, but believing is humility! Let me prove it.  
I think I used this illustration among you some little time ago. There are two children of one parent and the father says to the two children, “On such a day I intend to give you both a toy which has been the object of your ambition for many a day.” Well, the older boy of the two sits down and calculates that the present will be expensive—and he begins to doubt whether his father can afford to purchase it. He remembers many times in which he has offended his parent, or broken his parent’s commands and, therefore, he doubts whether he shall ever have it. He feels that he is unworthy— therefore he goes about the house without any joy, without any confidence. If anybody asks him whether his father will give him this present or not, he says, “Well, I—I hope so. I trust so.”  
Now, there is his little brother and the moment he heard that he was to have this present, he clapped his hands and ran out to his companions and said, “I am to have such-and-such a thing given me!” His brother checked him, “You are too presumptuous to say that.” “No,” said the little one, “for Father said he would give these toys to us.” “Oh, but,” said the other, “remember that you and I have often broken his commands!” “But he said he would.” “Oh, but the thing is expensive!” “Ah, but Father said he would and unless you can prove that my father tells lies, I shall go and rejoice in the bright hope that he will keep his promise!” Now, I think that the younger of the two is less presumptuous than his brother, for certainly it is a high presumption for a child to doubt the veracity of his parent! No matter how excellent your reasoning may seem to be, and how clear it may be to the eyes of the flesh, it is always pride to doubt God! And to believe God—though, to the carnal mind which can never understand the bravery of faith, it may look like presumption—is always a badge of the truest and most reverent humility!  
Beloved, you may know whether you are Christ’s or not! I exhort you not to give sleep to your eyes till you know it! What? Can you rest when you do not know whether you are saved or not? O Sirs, can you sit down at your tables and feast—can you go about your daily business with this thought in your mind, “If I should drop dead, I do not know whether I should be found in Heaven or in Hell”? I tell you nothing but certainties will suit my soul! I hope I never shall rest comfortable while under a doubt of my interest in Christ. Doubts may come—these we can understand—but to be

comfortable under doubts, we hope we never shall comprehend! No, nothing but to—  
*“Read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies”*  
can give me joy and peace through believing! “You have received Christ the Lord.” Just pass the question around the gallery there, and ask yourselves down below, “Have I received Christ Jesus the Lord?” Say, “Yes,” or, “No,” and God help you to give the answer solemnly as in His sight!  
II. As briefly as possible we turn to notice THE COUNSEL GIVEN—“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” There are three things suggested by the word, “walk”—continuance, progress, activity.  
To walk in a certain way means continuing in it. Now, Christian, you took Christ to be your All-in-All, did you not? Well, then, continue to take Him as your All-in-All. The true way for a Christian to live is to live entirely upon Christ. Living by frames and feelings is a dying form of life. “He lived by a feeling experience,” said one—and a poor method of living, too! Christians have experiences and they have feelings, but, if they are wise, they never feed upon these things, but upon Christ, Himself. You took Christ to be your All-in-All at first. You did not, then, mix up your frames and feelings with Him—you looked entirely out of self to Him. Well now, continue in the same frame of mind! You sat down at the foot of the Cross and you said—  
*“Now free from sin, I’ll walk at large  
My Savior’s blood’s my full discharge!  
At His dear feet myself I lay—  
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*  
Well, then stay there! Stay there! Never get an inch beyond that position. When you get sanctified, still look to Christ as if you were unsanctified! When you are on the verge of being glorified, look to Him as if you were just newly come out of the hole of the Pit. Hang upon Christ, you who are the best, just as though you were the worst! The same faith which saved Mary Magdalene, which saved Saul of Tarsus—must save you in the moment when you shall be the nearest to the perfect image of Christ Jesus! It is “none but Jesus” now to your soul—let it be “none but Jesus—none but Jesus,” as long as you live!  
In walking, there is not only continuance, but also progress. After a man becomes a Christian, he has not to lay again the foundation, but he has to go on and to advance in the Divine Life. Still, wherever he shall advance, he is always to say, “None but Christ! Christ is all!” Depend upon it, every inch of progress that you make beyond a simple reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ will entail the painful necessity of your going back. If you begin to patch Christ’s robe of righteousness with the very best rags of your own, no matter how cleanly you may have washed them, every rag will have to be unraveled, and every stitch will have to be cut! There is the Rock, Christ Jesus. Some Christians begin building their own stages on the Rock. How carefully they tie the timbers together. How neatly they plane and smooth them. And then they get high up upon these stages that they have built and they feel so happy—they have such frames! Such feelings! Such graces! Such fullness! And they are inclined to look down upon those poor souls who are crying, “None but Jesus!” By-and-by there comes a storm and the edifice they have built begins to creak, and crack, and rock to and fro—and they begin to cry, “Ah, where are we now? Now we shall perish! Now Christ’s love begins to dry up! Now He will fail us!” No—no such thing! It is not Christ who is failing you! It is not the Rock that is shaking, but what you have built upon the Rock! Come down from the stage which you have built and, as Job says, “embrace the Rock for want of a shelter.” I believe those souls have the most safety and comfort who simply trust to Christ. Was it not Irving who said that he believed his good works had done him more harm than his bad works had done him, for his bad ones drove him to Christ, but his good ones led him to rely upon them? And, after all, are not our good works, bad works, for is there not something in all of them to make us fly to the fountain of the Savior’s blood for cleansing?  
“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,” also implies activity. Christians are not to be lie-a-beds, nor forever to sit still. There is an activity in religion without which it is of little worth. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Help the poor. Teach the ignorant. Comfort the miserable. But take care that when you do all this, you do it in Christ, and for Christ—and let no thought of merit stain the act! Let no reflection of getting salvation for yourself come in to mar it all, but in Christ Jesus walk day by day. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if a thunderstorm were to come on just now while we are sitting here, and if the lightning should come flashing in at these windows and run with its blue flame down these columns, you and I might begin to feel some alarm! And if one were struck dead in our presence, in what kind of state would you and I likely to be amidst such confusion and alarm? If I were to choose the words which I would like to say at such a moment, they would be these—  
*“Nothing in my hands I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*  
You are on board ship in a storm just now. There goes a mast into the water! The lifeboats have all drifted away. The ship is pretty sure to be dashed on yonder rock! Pallor is on every cheek and turmoil every side. What is your prayer as you kneel down? What are your thoughts? Do you think, now, about your sermons, about your visiting the sick, about your prayers and your experiences? No! I tell you that they will seem to you to be nothing better than dross and dung when you are in such a state of apprehension! But you will cling to Christ’s Cross and be conveyed to Heaven, let the stormy winds blow as they will! And if everything were silent, tonight—could we hear nothing but the ticking of the clock were we, ourselves, reclining on our death pillow? While loving friends wiped the clammy sweat from our brow, surely we would, each one, wish to say—  
*“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness!  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand!  
All other ground is sinking sand.”*  
Well, walk in Him just as you would walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but walk on the mountaintops of life’s activities!  
III. Let us now say a few words on our third point—THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US HERE. We are to walk in Him as we received Him.  
And how did we receive Him? Let us remember. You will not have to strain your memories much, for, I think, though other days have mingled with their fellows and, like coins worn in the circulation, have lost their impression, yet the day when you first received Christ will be as fresh as though it were newly minted in time. Oh, that first day!—  
*“Do mind the place, the spot of ground  
Where Jesus did you meet?”*  
Some of us can never forget either that place or that time. Well, how did we receive Christ?’  
We received Him very gratefully, having no claim whatever to His Grace. We felt that we had done everything to deserve God’s wrath. We confessed that there was no merit in us, but we perceived that there was mercy in Him—  
*“We saw One hanging on a tree  
In agonies and blood”  
—*and as He told us to look at Him and assured us that there was life in a look, we did—and we were lightened, and we found life in Him! Surely we had shaken our hands of all merit, as Paul shook off the viper into the fire at Melita. We had no confidence, then, in any resolutions of our own, in any performances yet to come, much less in anything past. Well, then, we are to come now as empty-handed as we came then! Our song is to be—  
*“Nothing in my hands I bring—  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*  
How did we receive Christ? Well, we received Him very humbly. Whatever pride may be in our heart—and there is much of it—and, I suppose we shall never get rid of it till we are wrapped in our windingsheets—there was as little that day as we ever had at any other time. Oh, how humbly did we creep to the foot of the Cross! We were then broken in heart and contrite in spirit. Ah, Christian, can you remember what humble views you had of yourself—what a sink of depravity you felt your heart to be? Do you not recollect Augustine’s expression when he compares himself to a walking dunghill? And did you not feel yourself to be something of that kind—so base, so loathsome that you could only stand afar off and cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner”? And you cried to Christ just as Peter did, “Lord, save me!” And just as the sea seemed about to swallow you up, you laid hold upon His outstretched hand and you were saved! Now, tonight, do the same. Your danger is as great as ever out of Christ. Your sin is as great as ever out of Him. Come then, casting away all the pride which your experiences and graces may have worked in you—come to Him and take Him for your All-in-All!  
How did we receive Christ? If I recollect rightly—and I think I do—we received Him very joyfully. Oh, what joy my soul had when first I knew the Lord! It was holy day in my soul that day. Perhaps we have never had such joyous days since then, and the reason has been, most likely, because we have been thinking about other things and have not thought so much about Christ Jesus the Lord. Come, let us again take Him! The wine is as sweet—let us drink as deeply as ever. Christ, the Bread of Heaven, is as nourishing. Come, let us eat as heartily as ever. Fill your omers, O you poor and weak ones! Gather much, for you shall have nothing left over. This Manna is very sweet—it tastes like wafers made of honey. Come to my Master as you came at first and He will give you to drink of the living waters once again!  
How did we receive Christ? I am sure we received Him very graciously. He stood at the door and knocked, and we said, “Come in.” Your Savior, my dear Friends, was long a stranger to your hearts. “Come in,” we said. We knew that He meant to take the best seat at the table. We understood that He came as Master and Lord, but we said, “Come in.” We did not quite know all that the Cross might mean, but whatever it might mean, we meant to take it! Surely that day, when He asked us, “Can you drink of My cup, and can you be baptized with My Baptism?” our soul said, “We are able.” And though we have been unfaithful to Him, yet I hope tonight we can take Christ as unreservedly as ever. Had I dreamed, when first I preached His Gospel, that the way of the ministry would be so rough and thorny, my flesh would have shunned it! But, despite all, let it be what it is and ten thousand times worse, come in, my Master! Come and take Your servant—let me lie like a consecrated bull upon the altar, to be wholly burned, and not an atom left! Brothers, do you not feel the same? On this platform I have sometimes prayed that if the crushing of us might lift Christ one inch higher, it might be so! And if the dragging of our names through mire and dirt could make Christ’s Church more pure, we have prayed that it might be so! We have prayed that if any shame, if any dishonor, if any pain might put one more jewel in His crown than could be there in any other way, we might have the honor of suffering and being made ashamed for His sake!  
And I think, Brothers and Sisters, though the flesh struggles, we may pray tonight, “Lord, bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar.” We have received Christ and in that same way— unreservedly, we desire to walk in Him—  
*“Have you counted the cost? Have you counted the cost You followers of the Cross?  
And are you prepared, for your Master’s sake, To suffer all worldly loss?  
And can you endure with that virgin band, The lowly and pure in heart  
Who, where ever the Lamb does lead,  
From His footsteps never depart?  
Do you answer, ‘We can’? Do you answer, ‘We can, Through His love’s constraining power’?  
But do you remember the flesh is weak,  
And will shrink in the trial-hour?  
Yet yield to His love who around you now The bands of a man would cast.  
The cords of His love who was given for you To His altar binding you fast.  
You may count the cost, you may count the cost Of all Egypt’s treasure,  
But the riches of Christ you can never count— His love you can never measure.”*  
“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”  
But oh, some of you have never received Him, so my last word is to them. Do you ask, “What is the way of salvation?” It is by receiving Christ. Oh, then come and receive Him! May the Holy Spirit’s power lead sinners to Christ! You need not bring anything to Him. You need not bring a soft heart to Him. You need not bring tears of repentance to Him. But just come and take Christ. Remember, it is not what you are, but it is what Christ is that saves you! Never look at yourself, but look at the wounds of Jesus! There is life there. God help you to look—to look tonight! And if you shall find Him, our prayer shall be that from this day forth, you shall walk in Him and He shall have the glory!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Psalms 90.**

A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.  
It may help us to understand this Psalm if we recollect the circumstances which surrounded Moses when he was in the desert. For forty years he had to see a whole generation of people die in the wilderness. In addition to the deaths which might occur among those who were born in the wilderness, the whole of that great host which came out of Egypt, numbering, probably, between two and three million persons, must lie in their graves in the desert so that there must have been constant funerals—and the march of the children of Israel could be perceived along the desert track by the graves which they left behind them. You do not wonder, therefore, at this expression of the awe of “Moses, the man of God” as he was so continually reminded of the mortality of mankind. And note how reverently and trustfully he turns to the ever-living and eternal God and rests in Him.

Verse 1. LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. “Did not Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all our fathers dwell in You? And though we are now weary-footed pilgrims who have no fixed dwelling place on earth, we do dwell in You. You, Lord, are the true home of all the generations of Your people.”

2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or before You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. God is the only Being who has had eternal and essential Existence independently of all others—and all others have owed their existence to Him.

3. You turn man to destruction and say, Return, you children of men. He sends us forth into life, and He calls us back again in death.  
4. For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Yesterday, while it was with us, was a short period of 24 hours. But when it is past, it seems like nothing at all. A thousand years, all big with events which we consider to be full of weight and importance, make up a long period in which myriads of men come and go—yet those thousand years, in God’s sight, “are but as yesterday when it is past,” or but as the few hours in the night during which the mariner keeps watch at sea and then is relieved by another. A thousand years are but “as a watch in the night” to the Eternal—and He needs no one to relieve Him, for “He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”  
5*.*You carry them away as with a flood. They have no power to stem the torrent.  
5. They are as a sleep. Our earthly existence is but “as a sleep.” Many things are not what they seem to us to be in our fevered dreams. The time of awaking is coming and then things will appear very different to us from what they seem to be now.  
5. They are like grass which grows up. Fresh, green, vigorous, lovely, restful to the eyes.  
6*.*In the morning it flourishes, and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers. It needs no long period, ages upon ages, to destroy its beauty. Only let the swiftly-passing day come to its waning and the grass “is cut down and withers.”  
7*.*For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled. If we had to endure the flames of God’s anger, we would be consumed by it. But I think that Christians should not read this passage as though it applied to them. They are not under the Divine anger, nor need they fear being troubled by the Divine wrath, for His anger is turned away from them through the great atoning Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. But the children of Israel in the wilderness were being consumed by God’s anger and by His wrath they were being troubled, so that the words of Moses did apply to them.  
8, 9. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your Countenance. For all our days are passed away in Your wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. Like a romance, with which the Orientals still delight to beguile the passing hours. Such is the life of man—“as a tale that is told.”  
10. The days of our years are threescore years and ten. This was a gloomy fact to Moses, who lived to be 120 years of age and who probably remembered other men who had been far older than himself. Yet it is well that the ordinary period of human life has been shortened. It is still far too long for those who do evil, though it may not be too long for those who do good. Yet there are, even now, some who outlive their usefulness, and who might have been happier if they had finished their course sooner. “The days of our years are threescore years and ten.”  
10. And if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Where do we fly? That is the all-important point! The cutting of the string that holds the bird by the foot is a blessing or a curse according to the way in which it takes its flight. If we fly up to build our nest on yonder trees of God that are full of sap, then, indeed, we do well when we fly away. And we may even long for the wings of a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest.  
11, 12. Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to Your fear, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. It has been well said that many men will number their cows, and number their coins, but forget to number their days! Yet that is a kind of arithmetic that would be exceedingly profitable to those who practiced it aright. Counting our days and finding them but few, we should seek to use them discreetly—we should not reckon that we could afford to lose so much as one of them! Who would be a spendthrift with so small a store as that which belongs to us?  
13, 14. Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent You concerning Your servants. O satisfy us early with Your mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. “If they are but few, yet let them be happy. Give us an abundance of Your mercy, O Lord, and let us have it at once, so that however few our days may be, every one of them may be spent in the ways of wisdom and, consequently, in the ways of peace and happiness.”  
15. Make us glad according to the days wherein You have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. “Balance our sorrows with an equal weight of joys. Give us Grace equivalent to our griefs and if You have given us a bitter cup of woe, now let us drink from the golden chalice of Your love, and so let our fainting spirits be refreshed.”  
16. Let Your work appear unto Your servants. May we have Grace to devote ourselves entirely to God’s service and do the work which He has appointed us to do!  
16. And Your glory unto their children. If we may not live to see the success of our efforts, may our children see it! If the glory of that bright millennial age, which is certain to come in due time, shall not gladden our eyes before we fall asleep in Jesus, let us do the Lord’s work as far as we can that our children may see His Glory.  
17. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish You the work of our hands upon us. Even if we die, let our work live. May there be something permanent remaining after we are gone—not wood, hay, and stubble, which the fire will consume, but a building of gold, silver, and precious stones which will endure the fire that, sooner or later, will “try every man’s work of what sort it is.”  
17. Yes, the work of our hands establish You it.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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“AS” AND “SO”  
NO. 3173

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1909.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 3, 1873.

*“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”* **Col 2:6***.*

[Two other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are Sermons #483, Volume 8— LIFE AND WALK OF FAITH and #3030, Volume 53—A CONSISTENT WALK FOR TIME TO COME— Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THIS is a very simple text, yet no human being has ever discovered its full meaning. It is a great deep—happy are they who know how to dive into its depths and to swim at ease in its lengths and breadths! Blessed are they who continually obey the exhortation which it contains, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” The text divides itself into faith and practice. “You have received Christ Jesus the Lord,” there is your faith. “Walk you in Him,” that is to be your daily practice!

The text also contains a model for that practice in the “as” and the “so” which are its cardinal points. “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” What we have done suggests the way in which we are to do what still lies before us. “As you have received...so walk.”

I. Notice in the text, first, THE FACT STATED. “You have received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
Whatever else you have done or have not done, you have received Christ. The act of faith was the putting out of your empty hands to receive all the fullness of the Godhead in receiving Christ. There are some precious experiences to which you have not yet attained, some lofty heights to which you have not yet climbed, but you “have received Christ Jesus the Lord.” That is the distinguishing mark of all true Christians! Though you may not all belong to the same denomination, yet without a single exception this is true concerning you, whether you are old or young, whether you are well-instructed or ill-taught, whether you are full of faith or are troubled with many a doubt and many a fear, you “have received Christ Jesus the Lord.”  
There is nothing in this fact to cause you one boastful thought. You have received, that is what emptiness does in order that it may be filled, that is what hunger does in order that its cravings may be satisfied, that is what the beggar in the street does when he craves and obtains alms. There is nothing of which you can glory in the fact that you have received, for I may further remind you that even your very receiving you have received! The faith by which you received Christ was as much the gift of God to you as was the Christ upon whom your faith was fixed. You know that it is so and, therefore, you also know that boasting is forever excluded from the fact that you are saved! You have received Christ Jesus, that is all. I hope you prize the Gift, and praise the Giver. I trust that you often cry with the Apostle Paul, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” And that your soul makes her boast in the Lord concerning the Savior whom you have received, but no other boasting is permissible even for a moment!  
I remind you once more, Beloved, that, you have received CHRIST. It is true that you have received His Doctrines and that you still believe them. It is true that you have received His precepts and that you have obeyed them, though, alas, your obedience has been far from perfect. It is true that you have received His ordinances and that you have conformed to them by being baptized on profession of your faith in Him—and by sitting down with your fellow Believers at His Table. But, after all, the main point is that you have received Jesus Christ, Himself! Every word that He has spoken is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, but sweeter far are the lips with which He uttered those words! Every command of His is to be esteemed more highly than the finest of fine gold, but as for the King who gave those commands, “He is altogether lovely.” Human language cannot describe Him and yet you have received Him—His very Self—you have received into your hearts to dwell there as your only Lord and Master. You have received Him as your life, for you live through Him. And you receive Him day by day as the Bread of Life upon which your soul feeds and as the Water of Life which quenches the thirst of your soul. You have not merely received His offices, His gifts, His Grace, His promises, but you have received Him! He is the center of your confidence, the target of your hopes!  
The text says that you have received “Christ Jesus the Lord.” Here are three out of His many names and, first, Beloved, you have received Him as Christ, the Anointed of God. You see in Him no amateur Savior, uncommissioned—but One sent by the Father, the authorized Representative of the Most High—the Christos, the Messiah, the Sent One, who could rightly apply to Himself the ancient promise, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” Christ came to this world because the Father sent Him. He said to the Jews, “I came down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” He lived and died here because it pleased the Father for Him to do so. And He is still appointed by the Father to distribute unnumbered gifts to His people. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” You believe that upon Christ, the Spirit rests without measure, that He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and in receiving Him as the Anointed One, you also have an unction from the Holy One and, therefore, you also are anointed to be kings and priests unto God. So you have received Him as Christ, the Anointed.  
But you have also received Him as Jesus, and you love that charming name. No hymn more truly expresses your feelings than that one by John Newton which begins—  
*“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a Believer’s ears!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, And drives away his fears.”*  
You also sing with Bernard of Clairvaux—  
*“Jesus, the very thought of You  
With sweetness fills my breast.  
But sweeter far Your face to see  
And in Your Presence rest.  
Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,  
Nor can the memory find  
A sweeter sound than Your blest name,  
O Savior of mankind!”*  
You received Him as your Savior and, therefore, He has saved you from the penalty of sin and He will also save you from the dominion and power of sin. If you are saved, you are saved entirely through Jesus—and you do not need, and you do not desire any other Savior! You look to Jesus for all that can be comprehended in the word, salvation. His name means Savior and you have found Him to be a Savior to you. So you have received the anointed Savior, Christ Jesus.  
And you have received Him as the Lord. You have not accepted Him as merely one of many anointed Prophets, nor as a man sent from God, as John the Baptist was, but you worship Him as the Lord! And oh, how blessed it is to adore the Son of God! We cannot make any terms of peace with those who deny the Deity of Christ, nor ought they to want to be at peace with us, for if Christ is not the Son of God, we are idolaters. And if He is, they are not Christians! There is a great gulf between us and them and we do not hesitate for a moment to say on which side of that gulf we stand. That same Jesus who was nailed to the tree is to us both Lord and Christ. By faith we put our finger into the print of the nails and our hand into His pierced side—and never questioning the fact that He is truly Man, we rejoice to say to Him, as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God.” Jesus Christ is, indeed, to us “very God of very God.” This being so, we have received Him as our Lord to rule and govern us. In spiritual matters He is our only King—we acknowledge no master save Him who is The Master, of whom Martha said to her sister Mary, “The Master is come, and calls for you.”  
No teacher has any right to impart to us any instruction except that which he has received from the only Infallible Teacher. “He is the head of the body, the Church,” and we recognize no other headship. We joyfully acknowledge that He is our Sovereign Lord in the spiritual realm! He is the absolute Monarch of our soul! He is that perfect Husband who is the true Head of His mystical body, the Church. Oh, that we more fully carried out, practically, in every thought, wish and action of our entire life, all that is implied in receiving Jesus Christ as Lord!  
Beloved Friends, as I look round upon you all and gaze into your faces, this question rushes from my heart to my lips—Have all of you received Christ Jesus the Lord? Alas, I am sorrowfully persuaded that there are some of you who have not received Him! He has knocked again and again with those pierced hands of His, at the door of your heart, but you have not let Him in! This fountain of the Water of Life has flowed close to your feet, yet you have not drunk of it. Christ has been set before you as the Bread of Life sent down from Heaven, but you have not eaten of Him—you have refused Him even until now! “No,” you say, “you are too severe in charging us with having refused Christ, for we have not done that!” Well, it seems to me that this is just what you have done, but I will put it more softly and say that, at any rate, you have not received Him. You have put Him off to a more convenient season which will probably never come to you. O poor Souls, poor Souls, how sad is your state in not having received Christ Jesus the Lord! Leaving out Heaven and eternity for the moment—and speaking only of today—how wretched you must be in not having received Christ! When I see a man who has never seen the sun, I pity him, but not as I pity you who have never seen the Sun of Righteousness! If I heard of a child who had never known a father’s love and who had never looked up with affection into a mother’s face, I would pity that poor orphan, but not as much as I pity you who are living without a Savior! If I knew a man who had never known what health was, but who, from the day of his birth, was always sickly and bowed down with pain and infirmity, I would pity him, but not as I pity you who are sick unto death, yet who will not accept healing from the Great Physician! May God look down upon you, now, not only with pity, as He always does, but also in the power of His Almighty Grace and turn the heart of stone to flesh and lead you to receive Christ Jesus as Lord! That is all you have to do—to receive Jesus as the parched earth receives the refreshing showers, and as the wilted lilies receive the reviving rain drops and lift up their drooping heads again. That is all you have to do— receive Jesus! A child can receive. The feeblest can receive. Yes, one lying at the point of death, the sick man dying of fever may receive the cooling draught that is put to his lips! This is all that is asked of you—that you will receive Christ Jesus the Lord! Oh, that you would all receive Him now! God grant that it may be so and He shall have the praise!  
II. Now, secondly, notice THE COUNSEL GIVEN—“so walk you in Him.” The text not only reminds us of what we have done, but it also tells us what we are now to do!  
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it is not easy to decide whether this counsel is to be regarded as a permission or as a precept—“so walk you in Him.” Taking them either way, the words are a sweet morsel in my mouth. Yet I think I prefer to regard them as a permission. Suppose I had been to Jesus as a poor sinner and that He had saved me and that He had then said to me, “there, you are saved, so go your way. You have been a prodigal, but you are forgiven. You have shoes on your feet, a ring on your finger and the best robe to cover your nakedness—now go and do what you can for yourself”? Well, it would have been Infinite Mercy that would have welcomed me and pardoned me, but how much more gracious and tender is the Lord’s message, “Come, My child take up your abode with Me and wander away no more.” It is thus that God speaks to all who have believed in Jesus, “You have received Jesus Christ the Lord, so now you may walk in Him and you may always walk in Him! What He was to you at the first, He may be to you, still, and He may be to you forever and ever! Did you at the first eat Him as the Bread of Life to your soul? Then go on still eating Him! Did you spiritually drink of Him as the Water of Life? Then still drink of Him. He is yours forever, so continue to draw from His fullness all that you need! As you have received Him, so keep on receiving Him.” Surely, this is a most gracious permission as well as a very precious precept!  
“Walk in Him.” Does not this mean, first, look upon Jesus Christ as your Way to Heaven and walk in Him? Look upon Him as your Forerunner and follow Him. Look upon Him as your Companion and lean upon Him. Look upon Him as your delight and live in Him, abide in Him! The expression, “Walk in Him,” implies action and progress. Let your whole life be practically governed by your union with Christ, let your actions speak of your fellowship with Him. But walking also means progress, so do not stand still in Christ, but go on to know more and more of Him— make advances in the Christian life—“grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” There is also something of the idea of permanence in the precept, “Walk you in Him.” It means go nowhere else, but continue in Him—let your ordinary life and your common conversation indicate your closeness of communion with Him!  
“Walk you in Him.” I trust that at least some of us know what it is to “walk in Him.” Though we could not tell to others all that it means, yet it is a blessed fact in our experience and we intend, by God’s Grace, to “walk in Him” as long as we live. I think this is what walking in Him means—to wake up in the morning and to have our first thoughts full of the Savior—to seek His guidance and blessing in everything that is to happen to us during the day, to go down to our morning meal with our heart’s affection fixed upon Jesus, to go off to the business or the workshop in the full consciousness that He is going with us—when our hands are busy and our mind is occupied with our trading or our working, still realizing that our heart is with our Beloved in the secret place where none can follow us, and so, as the hours run on, through the noontide heat, Christ is our shade and shelter, in the cool of the evening His company is our supreme delight and then, as we retire to our bed, our last thought being—  
*“How sweet to rest  
Forever on our Savior’s breast!”*  
Christian, this ought to be your way of living! And if you are right with God, this is the way in which you actually do live. You “walk in Him.” What a lovely garden! What a delightful place! The air is balmy, the scenery all around is charming. There is nothing to distract, or disturb, or disgust—everything to delight, gratify and satiate the spirit—so “Walk in Him.” Climb to every lofty hill of His Infinite Love, explore the deepest recesses of His eternal purposes so far as they are accessible to mortal man! And in this way, “as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”  
III. Notice, thirdly, THE MODEL WHICH IS PRESENTED TO US IN THE TEXT. “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” The two emphatic words are, “as,” and, “so.” We are to walk in Christ Jesus as we received Him.  
There is great safety in going back to first principles. To make sure of being in the right way, it is well to look back to the gate by which we entered the way. You know how, in ordinary life, in the matter of mutual love, we often look back upon the early days of that experience as the sweetest. Not long ago I heard a good man, whose time had been very fully occupied in business so that for many a year he had scarcely been able to have a holiday, say that, when at last he did manage to take one with his wife, it was like his honeymoon. You also recollect how the Lord said to Israel, “I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness.” God likes us to go back in thought to the time when we began with Him—and I want to take you who are

Christians back to your first love of God. Perhaps with some of you, religion has become a very mechanical sort of thing— you have become stereotyped in your religious observances. You need to go back to the place where you first received Christ Jesus the Lord and there refurbish your faith, love and all your other Divine Graces!  
So I ask you, how did you receive Christ? Possibly your first answer is, “I received Him in the depth of sorrow and humiliation of soul. I had been broken in pieces by the great plow of the Law and was rent and torn asunder by my own consciousness of guilt. I lay before the Cross moaning and roaring like a wounded beast and in my extremity I received Christ as being the very Savior that I needed. I felt myself to be less than nothing and I took Him to be my All-in-All. Shivering in my nakedness through sin, I took His righteousness as my perfect covering. Famished to death, I took Him to be both my life and the food of that life. I grasped Christ in my despair at finding there was nothing else to which I could cling! Out of the great deeps of my soul’s distress, I cast myself upon His mercy, saying—  
*“I can but perish if I go,  
I am resolved to try—  
For if I stay away,  
I know I must forever die!’”*  
Our daily walk in Christ must be very much like that. Not exactly so, for there should be no unbelief in it. As for myself, I must confess that I never realize Christ’s preciousness so much as when I feel myself still to be apart from Him, an undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving sinner. Sometimes when our Lord gives us sweet enjoyments, we make too much of them by letting them come between Him and our souls. And when the Holy Spirit bestows upon us certain Graces, we think we are very fine fellows and carry our heads aloft very proudly—instead of giving all the Glory to His holy name. Now, if we ever act like that, we may rest assured that as we go up in our own estimation, Christ will go down—and that would be a sorry thing, indeed! Grow in Grace, but not in selfesteem. Have more faith, but do not boast of having it. Be full of zeal, but not of conceit concerning it. Be as holy as it is possible for you to become, but do not prate and brag about your holiness as some have done. Be not like those who push with horn and with shoulder the weak ones of the flock because they have not attained to such heights as these strong ones profess to have reached—though, possibly, the feebler and humbler ones are really nearer to God than the boasters are! Lie low, Brothers and Sisters, lie low, for what the old Essex farmer used to tell me is true, “If you are one inch above the ground, you are just that inch too high.” So lie low and thus continue to walk in Christ—yourself being nothing—and Christ being everything. You know that if you get to be something, Christ cannot then be everything to you. But if you are still nothing—and less than nothing in your own estimation—as you sink in self-esteem, your Lord will rise to His right position in your sight and so you will be walking humbly in Him as you ought!  
Think again how you received Christ. When you really did lay hold of Him by faith, I am sure that you received Him with great certainty. There was no mockery, no sham about your reception of Christ. You were a lost sinner and you were pointed to the only Savior—and you did really and truly look unto Him who said, “Look unto Me, and be you saved.” Whatever else there was in your look, there was intense earnestness in it. There was no pretence or affectation about it, it was very real! Is all your religion as real as that first faith-look at Jesus was? Do you walk in Him as truly and as decidedly as you did that first day? My dear Brother, do you ever pray sham prayers? My dear Sister, do you ever sing sham praises? Is there not a very great risk of our making our religion into a mere shell with no life in it? May God save us from everything that would be such a sham as that and make us as sincere in our walk in Christ as we were in our first reception of Him! I know that I was most anxious to be certain that I had really believed in Jesus to the saving of my soul. I was not satisfied with just one look at Jesus, but I looked, and looked, again and again, with a holy anxiety lest I might possibly have been mistaken and not really have trusted Christ as my Savior. I wish we had more of that sacred anxiety concerning our walking in Christ.  
We were not only very sincere in our early repentance and faith, but our reception of Christ was very vital. Salvation was to us a matter of life or death. It was not something about which we were only slightly concerned. It would be well if we manifested a similar vitality about our daily walk in Christ. There are some professors whom I know who do not seem to me to be alive much above their ankles—they have not sufficient vitality to reach up to their knees so as to make them mighty in prayer. They are alive, I hope, but they remind me very vividly of a remarkable but gruesome picture of the Resurrection that I once saw. There were skeletons coming out of the graves, with the bones only partly covered with flesh. One man had a head without any eyes in it. Another was stretching out an arm that was all bone—and the rest of the figures in the picture were of a similar character. It was a strange conception on the part of the painter, yet I fear it was only too true a representation of the spiritual state of many nominal Christians! I hope they are really rising from among the dead, but they have not risen yet into fullness of life. Many professors appear to have a very low vitality, if they are alive at all! Their hearts are hard and stony, their consciences insensitive—sin does not shock them as it shocks the young convert—he is startled and alarmed at the very appearance of evil—but they have become so callous that they walk unconcerned among scenes that ought to break their hearts! May the Lord save you, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, from all such callousness as that! May you have the same tender sensitiveness to sin that you had when you received Christ Jesus the Lord. And as you then welcomed Him with warm, loving, overflowing emotion, so may you walk in Him, all your days, as one who is alive from the dead—thoroughly alive—with all your powers and faculties in active exercise and your whole soul brimming over with love to Him!  
Did you not also, Beloved, receive Christ very eagerly? Have you ever helped to feed a man who had long been without food? If so, you know that it is a great treat to see how eagerly he eats. He does not pick over the meat to see if it is well done—it is all well done to him. He does not leave a scrap of food upon the plate and he looks round to see if there is any more that he can beg. It was in such a fashion that we feasted upon Christ when we first received Him. We had been for months, perhaps even for years, longing with a great heart-ache to find the Savior. And when we did find Him and began to feast upon Him, we thought we never could have enough of Him! Do you recollect how eager you were in those days to go where you could hear the Gospel? You went to a place which was so crowded that you could not get a seat, but you did not mind standing in the aisle and you did not feel tired, then! But now you need a nice soft cushion to sit on and a cushion even for your feet—and you are weary long before the sermon is finished! In those early days you would have walked many miles to hear about Jesus Christ—and even if the preacher’s language was somewhat rough and uncouth, what did you care about that, as long as he faithfully preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified? That is the way in which we should still eagerly walk in Christ, feeling that we can never have too much of His company, longing to be often where He meets with His people, delighting in His worship, charmed with everything He says and does! We received Christ eagerly, so let us walk in Him with the same eagerness and earnestness!  
Many of us also received Christ very resolutely. I know that I asked the question, over and over again, “Shall I go to Him?” And at last, when I was almost driven to despair, I cried, “I must, I will—  
*“‘I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin  
Has like a mountain rose.  
I know His courts, I’ll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.’”*  
That was how many of us received Christ Jesus the Lord. There were difficulties in our way, but we overcame them, for we were determined to be saved if it was possible. What sacred doggedness, what holy pertinacity will a soul bestow when it is resolved on being saved! Hunger will make a man break through stone walls and iron bars, but a soul that is hungering and thirsting after Christ does not know that there are any walls or bars, so overpowering is its eagerness to get to Him! It was with such eagerness as this that we received Christ Jesus the Lord. Are we just as eager to walk in Him? I know that some of you are sorely tempted—are you standing fast? Are you standing up for Jesus as you used to do when you first knew Him? Are you firm as a rock in your resistance to everything that is opposed to Him and to His Truth? You ought to be! Your song should still be that one of which you were so fond in those early days— *“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I’ll follow where He goes.”*  
A lion-like spirit was then in you! You would gladly have gone to prison for Christ’s sake, or even to death if He had required it. If somebody had told me, when I was converted, that I should have to go to prison and lie there for 12 years as John Bunyan did if I became a Christian, I verily believe that I would have leaped for joy at the prospect of so high an honor! To be a martyr for the Truth’s sake—the prospect looked glorious—the ruby crown glowed in the sunshine of our ardent anticipation and we envied those who had been privileged to wear it! It was so then. But, Beloved, is it so now? Can you cleave to Christ as tenaciously now as you did then? Can you bear to be in ill repute for His sake? Can you rejoice in being scoffed at because you are a Christian as you did when you received Christ Jesus the Lord? If you cannot, blush and be ashamed and, from henceforth, pray that with the same undaunted courage and determination with which you received Him, you may continue to walk in Him!  
I will not weary you by multiplying words, but I must ask whether you do not recollect how joyfully you received Christ. Ah, you cannot forget that, for in proportion to your sorrow before, was your joy when you accepted Christ as your Savior. No wonder you sang—  
*“Happy day, happy day,  
When Jesus washed my sins away!”*  
We are not surprised that Miriam and the women went out with timbrels and with dances when Pharaoh and all his host were drowned in the Red Sea. And we do not marvel at Miriam’s jubilant song, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” for our soul took a timbrel and our feet danced before the Lord as we sang unto Him who had triumphed so gloriously for us! As I go back and remind you of those early joys, I again ask you whether you are as joyous now as you were then? You ought to be a great deal more joyous, for you have had so much more cause to praise the Lord than you had then! Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us go again to Jesus as we went to Him at the first—let us go as poor, guilty, needy sinners to Jesus Christ upon the Cross just as though we had never gone before! If we do so, I can tell you what the consequence will be just as it was at the first. As we—  
*“View the flowing  
Of our Savior’s precious blood,  
With Divine assurance knowing  
He has made our peace with God”—*  
we shall feel as though we were young converts once again! We may be getting old and gray and, perhaps, cold as well as gray, but we shall become like little children again and we shall shout, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!” as the Son of David rides in triumph down the streets of our soul! Oh, that it may be so with many of us here! It ought to be so and it will be so if you walk in Christ Jesus the Lord as you received Him in the hour of your conversion!  
I will close my discourse when I have reminded you that when we received Christ Jesus the Lord, we received the whole of Him. We took Him for all that we knew of Him and we found that He was much more than we then thought He was. And we did not pick and choose and say, “We will have His pardon, but we will not have His sanctification.” We took the many-sided Christ, the Christ of many glorious Characters, the Christ of ten thousand times ten thousand beauties! We took Christ to teach us, Christ to lead us, Christ to feed us, Christ to cheer us, Christ for us to obey and Christ for us to delight in—we took a whole Christ! And then we gave Him our whole selves. We said, “Lord, take us, body, soul and spirit.” We prayed that the sacrifice might be bound with cords to the horns of the altar forever! We made no bargains with Him—we gave the freehold of our souls to Jesus—and of our bodies, too. And we only asked that we might not have a pulse beating except for Him, or our lungs heaving except as He was our very life. And we took Christ—at least I know I did—for better or worse, in health or in sickness, to have and to hold so that even death should never part us! We put our hand in His and asked Him to take us and keep us forever. And we took Him and said, “We will hold to You and will not let You go.” Since then there has been many a tug from Satan, who has tried to drag us away from Christ, or to make us think that Christ was going away from us—but we have managed to hold to Him to this hour! Perhaps you feel as though you had only got a hold of the hem of His garment. If so, try to get a firmer hold on Him! Gasp Him, hold Him by the feet, throw your arms about Him and tell Him that without a smile from Him, your spirit cannot rest! Tell Him that you are sick in love and need His Presence, and must have it! And beg Him, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, to come to you. Say unto Him, “My Lord, if You love me, come and show Your love. If, indeed, there is between You and me a union of an eternal nature, come to me! Be not a stranger to Your own flesh, but be now as You were of old. Come to me again and let Your left hand be under my head while Your right hand does embrace me.” Oh, for more of these blessed hungerings and longings! Beloved, we will never let Christ go! We took Him forever and we will hold Him forever! And, blessed be His name, He will hold us forever! We are in His hands and none can take us out. There shall we be when earth and Heaven are in a blaze! There shall we be when He shall sit upon His Judgment Seat! And there shall we be world without end. Amen!  
I leave this sermon with God’s people, but I cannot help adding that I do earnestly pray that all of you may receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Oh, come to Him tonight! He is willing that you should have Him—and every soul that wills to have Christ may have Him, for, “the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.” Amen, and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *1Jn 3:10-21***.**

Verses 10-12. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that Wicked One, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Some people try to deceive us with the notion that all men are the children of God, but John, writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, shows how false that idea is! Holiness and love distinguish the children of God from the children of the devil!

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. As Cain hated Abel, so worldlings hate the saints whose holiness is a continual rebuke to the ungodly.

14-16. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we  
love the brethren. [See Sermon #2556, Volume 44—LIFE PROVED BY LOVE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He that loves not his

brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us [See Sermons #2656, Volume

46—THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE and #2959, Volume 51—GOD’S LOVE TO THE SAINTS—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] and

we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Such self-sacrifice as this is the very highest form of love to the brethren and is a following of the example of Christ, who “laid down his life for us.”

17, 18. But whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother has need and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in Truth. Love that consists only of words is utterly worthless. If it is true love, it must prove itself by kind deeds and gracious actions.

19. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. The love that will pass this test will bring a restful assurance of peace to the heart.

20-22. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater that our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. It is not everyone who can have whatever he chooses to ask of God in prayer. This privilege is only granted to those who “keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” [See Sermon

#1103, Volume 19—THE CONDITIONS OF POWER IN PRAYER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

23. And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. Faith and love—faith in Christ and love to one another—are here most happily joined together! Let us never put them asunder.

24. And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. Though this great Truth of our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us is a great mystery, it is a mystery concerning which we need not be in doubt if we will learn of the Holy Spirit what He delights to teach us!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #483 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LIFE AND WALK OF FAITH  
NO. 483

**SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 7, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.***Col 2:6***.**

**OUR nature is fond of change. Although man was made in the image of God at first, it is plain enough that any trace of immutability which he may once have possessed has long ago departed. Man, unrenewed, could he possess the joys of Heaven, would in time grow weary of them and crave for change. When the children of Israel in the wilderness were fed on angels’ food, they murmured for variety and groaned out, “Our soul loathes this light bread.” It is little wonder, then, that we need cautions against shifting the ground of our hope and the object of our faith.**

**Another evil principle will work with this love of change in our hearts and produce much mischief—our natural tendency to build upon our own works. For a time that pernicious habit is cured by conviction of sin. The Law, with its sharp axe, cuts down the lofty cedar of fleshly confidence and withers all its verdure. But, since the root still remains, at the very scent of water it sprouts again and there is good need to set the axe going with all its former edge and weight. When we think legality quite dead, it revives, and, linking hands with our love of change, it tempts us to forsake our simple standing upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. It urges us to advance to a something which it decorates before our eyes with fancied colors and makes out, to our feeble understandings, to be better or more honorable to ourselves.**

**Though this will certainly be again beaten down in a Christian, for he will meet with trouble after trouble when once he goes astray from his first path, yet again the old secret desire to *be* something, to *do*** something, to have some little honor by performing the works of the Law, will come in and we shall have need to hear the voice of Wisdom in our hearts saying to us, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” Persevere in the same way in which you have begun, and, as at the first, Christ Jesus was the source of your life, the principle of your action, and the joy of your spirit, so let Him be the same even till life’s end—the same when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death and enter into the joy, and the rest, which remain for the people of God.

In trying to teach this very useful, though simple lesson, I shall, in the plainest possible language, first of all talk a little of the text *by way of exposition*. Then, secondly, *by way of advocacy*. And then, thirdly, *by way of application*.   
I. Oh that the gracious Spirit, who alone can lead us into all the Truth of God, would aid me while I endeavor to open up this verse BY WAY OF EXPOSITION. In expounding the text, we readily break it up into two parts—here is the life of faith—receiving Christ Jesus the Lord. Here is, secondly, the walk of faith—so walk you in Him.   
1. The Holy Spirit here reveals to us *the life of faith—*the way by which you and I are saved, if saved at all. Mark, carefully, that it is represented as *receiving*. Now the word, “receiving,” *implies the very opposite of anything like merit*. Merit is purchasing—merit might be called making by labor, or winning by valor. But receiving is just the accepting of a thing as a *gift*. The eternal life which God gives His people is in no sense whatever the fruit of their exertions. It is the gift of God. As the earth drinks in the rain, as the sea receives the streams, as night accepts light from the stars, so we, giving nothing, partake freely of the Grace of God.   
The saints are not, by nature, wells or streams. They are but cisterns into which the living water flows. They are but as the empty vessel. Sovereign mercy puts them under the pipe and they receive Divine Grace upon Divine Grace till they are filled to the brim. He that talks about winning salvation by works—he that thinks he can earn it by prayers, by tears, by penance, by mortification of the flesh, or by zealous obedience to the Law—makes a big mistake. For the very first principle of the Divine life is not giving out, but *receiving*. It is that which comes *from* Christ *into* me which is my salvation. Not that which springs out of my own heart, but that which comes from the Divine Redeemer, and changes, and renews my nature. It is not what I give out but what I *receive*, which must be life to me.   
The idea of receiving, again, seems to imply in it *a sense of realization*, making the matter *a reality*. One cannot very well receive a shadow. We receive that which is substantial. Gold, silver, precious stones—such things we can receive. Estates, riches, bread, water, food, raiment—all these are things which are substances to us, and therefore it becomes possible for us to *receive* them. We do not receive a dream. We do not receive, again, I say, a shadow. We do not speak of receiving a specter. We do not receive a phantom. There is something real in a thing that is received.   
Well now, so is it also in the life of faith. We realize Christ. While we are without faith, Christ is a name to us, a Person that may have lived a long while ago, so long that His life is only a history to us now! By an act of faith Christ becomes a real Person in the consciousness of our heart, as real to us as our own flesh, and blood, and bones—and we speak of Him and think of Him as we would of our brother, our father, our friend. Our faith gives a substance to the history and idea of Christ, puts real solidity into the spirit and name of Christ—and that which to the worldly man is but a phantom, a thing to hear about and talk about—becomes to us a thing to taste and handle, to lay hold upon and to receive as real and true.   
I know, you that are unconverted, think all these things an idle tale. But you that are saved, you who have received Christ—you know that there is substance here—and shadow everywhere else. This has become to you the one grand reality, that God is in Christ reconciling you unto Himself. But receiving means also a third thing, that is *getting a grip of it, grasping it*. The thing which I receive becomes my own. I may *believe* it to be real, but that is not *receiving* it. I may believe, also, that if I ever do get it, it must be given to me, and that I cannot earn it for myself. But still that is not *receiving* it. Receiving is the *bona fide* taking into my hands, and appropriating to myself as my own property that which is given to me.   
Now this is what the soul does when it believes on Christ. Christ becomes *my* Christ. His blood cleanses *my* sin, and it is cleansed. His righteousness covers *me*, and I am clothed with it. His Spirit fills me, and I am made to live by it. He becomes to me as much mine as anything that I can call my own. No, what I call my own here on earth is not mine. It is only lent to me, and will be taken from me. But Christ is so mine, that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to rob me of Him. Oh, I hope, dear Friends, you have that blessed appropriating faith which says, “Yes, He is not another man’s Christ, He is *my* Christ,” I hope you can look into His face today and say, “*My* Beloved, who loved *me* and gave Himself for me.”   
I hope you do not talk of these things as I might talk of my lord So-and-So’s park, and admire its beauties, while I, myself, have no right to one acre of the many thousands within the fence. But I trust, on the other hand, you can say— “The blessings and promises of the Lord, my God, are all my own. Whatever I read of in the Covenant of Grace that is good, that is comely, that is desirable, I have heard a voice say in my ears, “Lift up now your eyes and look to the north and the south, to the east and the west: all this have I given *you* to be your possession forever and ever by a covenant of salt.”   
Now put these three things together and I think your have the idea of receiving Christ. To receive Him is to have Him as the result of God’s free gift. To realize Him. And then to appropriate Him to yourselves. The word “receive” is used in some ten or a dozen senses in Holy Scripture. Five of them will suffice my purpose just now. To receive is often used for *taking*. We read of receiving a thousand shekels of silver, and of receiving money, garments, sheep and oxen. Perhaps in this sense we understand the words of the Master—“No man can receive anything unless it is given him from above.” And that other sentence—“To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”   
We take Christ into us—to return to my old simile—as the empty vessel takes in water from the stream—so we receive Christ. The love, life, merit, nature, and Grace of Jesus freely flow into us, as the oil into the widow’s vessels. But the word is also used in Scripture to signify *holding that which we take in*. Indeed, a vessel without a bottom could hardly be said to receive water. I do not suppose anyone would talk of a sieve receiving water except in a mock sense. But the life of faith consists in holding within us that which Christ has put into us, so that Jesus Christ is formed in us the hope of glory. By faith it comes in. By faith it is kept in. Faith gives me what I have, keeps what I have. Faith makes it mine, faith *keeps* it mine. Faith gets hold of it with one hand, and then clasps it with both hands with a grasp that neither death nor life can loose.   
Then, receiving sometimes means in Scripture simply *believing*. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” We read of receiving false prophets, that is, believing them. Now, to receive Christ is to believe Him. He says, “I can save you.” I receive that. He says, “I will save you.” I receive that. He says, “Trust Me and I will make you like Myself.” I receive that. Whatever Jesus says, I believe Him, and receive Him as true. I make His words so true to myself that I act upon them as being true, and regard them not as a word that may *possibly* be true but which *must* be true, even if Heaven and earth should pass away. This is receiving Christ—believing what He has said.   
Receiving, also, often signifies in Scripture *entertaining*. Thus the barbarous people at Melita received Paul and his companions kindly and kindled a fire. Ah, after we have once found all in Christ to be our own and have received Him into ourselves by faith, then we entreat the Lord to enter our hearts and sup with us. We give Him the best seat at the table of our souls. We would feast Him on the richest dainties of our choicest love. We ask Him to abide with us from morn till eve. We would commune with Him every day and every hour of the day. We entertain Him. We have a reception chamber in our hearts and we receive Christ.   
And then, once again, receiving in Scripture often signifies *to enjoy*. We hear of receiving a crown of life which fades not away. That is, enjoying it, enjoying Heaven, and being satisfied with all its bliss. Now, dear Friends, when we receive Christ, there is intended in this an enjoying of it. I am only now talking the simplicities of our faith, but I do want to make them very personal to you. Are you thus enjoying Christ? If you had a crown you would wear it. You have a Christ—feed on Him. If you were hungry and there was bread on the table, you would eat. Oh, eat and drink, Beloved, of your Lord Jesus Christ! If you have a friend, you enjoy his company—you have a Friend in Christ. Oh, enjoy His conversation! Do not leave Him, like a bottle of cordial for the fainting, sealed up from us.   
Let him not be as some choice dainty all untasted, while you are hungry. Oh, receive Christ, for this is the very Heaven and rest of the soul. His flesh is meat, indeed. His blood is drink, indeed. Never did angels taste such Divine fare. Come here, Saints, and satisfy yourselves in Him. To take Him into one’s self, to hold Him there, to believe every word He says, to entertain Him in our hearts, and to enjoy the luscious sweetness which He must confer upon all those who have eaten His flesh and have been made to drink of His blood—this it is, to receive Christ.   
But we have not brought out the real meaning of this life of faith yet till we dwell upon another word. As you have received. Received what? Salvation may be described as the blind receiving sight, the deaf receiving hearing, the dead receiving life. But Beloved, Beloved, here is a thought here—oh that you may get hold of it! We have not only received these things but we have received CHRIST. “As you have received *Christ Jesus the Lord*.” Do you see it? It is true that He gave us life from the dead. He gave us pardon of sin. He gave us imputed righteousness. These are all precious things— but do you see we are not content with them?   
We have received *Christ Himself*! The Son of God has been poured out into us, and we have received Him, and appropriated Him. Mark, I say, not merely the blessings of the Covenant, but *Himself*! Not merely the purchase of His blood, but He Himself, from whose veins the blood has flowed, has become ours. And every soul that has eternal life is this day a possessor of Christ Jesus the Lord. Now we will put this, also, personally to you. Have I received *Christ*, that is the *Anointed*? My soul, have you seen Christ as the Anointed of the Father in the Divine decree to execute His purposes? Have you seen Him coming forth in the fullness of time wearing the robes of His priesthood, the Anointed of the Father?   
Have you seen Him standing at the altar offering Himself as a Victim, an anointed Priest, anointed with the sacred oil by which God has made Him a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedek? My Soul, have you seen Jesus going within the veil and speaking to Your Father and to His Father as One whom the Father has accepted, of whom we can speak, in the language of David, as our shield and God’s Anointed? Oh, it is a delight, indeed, to receive Christ not as an unsent Prophet, not as a man who came of His own authority, not as a teacher who spoke His own words, but as One who is *Christos*, the Anointed, the Anointed of God, ordained of the Most High, and therefore most certainly acceptable!   
As it is written, “*I* have laid help upon One that is mighty, I have exalted One chosen out of the people. It pleased the *Father* to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief.” Delightful is the contemplation of Christ under that aspect! Soul, do you thus receive the Messiah of God? But the text says,” Christ *Jesus*.” Now Jesus means a Savior. *Christ* is His relation to God, *Jesus* His relation to *me*. Have I received Christ in His relationship to *me* as a Savior? My Soul, has Christ saved you? Come, no “ifs” and “ands” about it. Have you received Him as your Savior? Could you say in that happy day when your faith closed with Him, “Yes, Jesus, You have saved me”?   
Oh, there are some professors of religion who do not seem to have received Christ as *Jesus.* They look upon Him as One who may *help* them to save themselves, who can do a great deal for them, or may *begin* the work, but not complete it. Oh, Beloved, we must get a hold of Him as one that has saved us, that has finished the work. What? Don’t you know that you are this day whiter than the driven snow because His blood has washed you? You are this day more acceptable to God than unfallen angels ever were, for you are clothed in the perfect righteousness of the Divine One. Christ has wrapped you about with His own righteousness. You are saved! You have received Him as God’s Anointed. See that you receive Him as Jesus, your Savior.   
Then, again, it is clear that saving faith consists also in receiving Him *as He is in Himself, as the Divine Son*. “You have received Christ Jesus *the Lord*.” Those who they say cannot believe in His Deity have not received Him. Others theoretically admit Him to be Divine, but He is never a subject of confidence as such. They have not received Him. But I trust I speak to many hundreds this morning who willingly accept His Godhead and say, “I entertain no doubt about His Deity and, moreover, on that I risk my soul. I do take Him into my heart as being God over all, blessed forever, Amen. I kiss His feet while I see His humanity. But I believe that, since those feet could tread the waters, He is Divine.   
“I look up to His hands, and as I see them pierced I know that He is human. But as I know that those hands multiplied the loaves and fishes till they fed five thousand, I know that He is Divine. I look upon His corpse in the tomb, and I see that He is Man. I see Him in the resurrection, and I know that He is God. I see Him on the Cross, suffering, and I know that He is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. But I hear a voice which says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.’ And I bow before Him and say, ‘Oh Lord, You Son of God, and son of Mary, I receive You as Christ Jesus *the Lord*.’ ”   
Now this is all very plain talking, you will say. And I remind you that souls are saved by very plain truths, and the dealings of men’s souls with Christ are not carried on in learned or metaphysical terms. We do believe, and so take Christ Jesus the Lord into us, and by that act of faith, without any doing of our own, we are completely saved.   
I shall only make this further remark here, that the Apostle speaks of this as a *matter of certainty* and goes on to argue from it. Now we do not argue from a supposition. I must have you clear, dearly Beloved in the Lord, that this is a matter of certainty *to you*. We can hardly get to the next point unless you can say, “I have received Jesus.” The verse runs, “As, or since, *you have* received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him.” We must not alter it into, “Since *I hope* I have,” “Since *I trust* I have.” You either have or have not.   
If you have not, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God and cry to Him for His great gift. But if you have, O, dear Friends, do not let it be a question with you, but say, “Yes, yes, yes, I can say, once and for all, I have received Him. Poor, weak, and worthless though I am, I do put my humble seal to the fact that God is true, and I trust in Him who is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” This is the life of faith.   
2. Now, in expounding the text, our second point was *the walk of faith*. “Since you have received Him, walk in Him.” Walk implies, first of all, *action*. Do not let your reception of Christ be a mere thing of thought to you, a subject only for your chamber, and your closet—but act upon it all. If you have really received Christ, and are saved, act as if you were saved—with joy, with meekness, with confidence, with faith, with boldness. Walk in Him—do not sit down in indolence—but rise and act in Him. Walk in Him. Carry out into practical effect that which you believe.   
See a man who has received an immense fortune, his purse is bursting, and his caskets are heavy. What does he do? Why, he behaves like a rich man. He sees a luxury which pleases him, and he buys it. There is an estate he desires, and he purchases it. He acts like a rich man. Beloved Brethren, you have received Christ—act upon it. Do not play the beggar, now that boundless wealth is conferred upon you!   
Walking, again, implies *perseverance.* Not only being in Christ *today—*that would be standing in Him and falling from Him. But being in Him tomorrow, and the next day, and the next, and the next, and the next—walking in Him all your walk of life. I remember Matthew Henry, speaking about Enoch walking with God, says he did not only take a turn or two up and down with God, and then leave Him, but he walked with God four hundred years. This implies perseverance. You have received Christ—persevere in receiving Him. You have come to trust Him—keep on trusting Him. You hang about His neck as a poor, helpless sinner—remain hanging there. In other words, abide in Him.   
Walking implies *habit*. When we speak of a man’s walk and conversation, we mean his habits, the constant tenor of his life. Now, dear Friends, if you and I sometimes enjoy Christ, and then forget Him, if sometimes we say He is ours and soon loose our hold, that is not a habit. We do not *walk* in Him. But if you have received Him, let it be your habit to live upon Him, keep to Him—cling to Him, never let Him go—live and have your being in Him. This walking implies a *continuance*. There is no notice given in the text of the suspension of this walking, but there must be a continual abiding in Christ. How many Christians there are who think that in the morning and evening they ought to come into the company of Christ, but then they may be in the world the rest of the day?   
Ah, but we ought *always* to be in Christ, that is to say, all the day long, every minute of the day. Though worldly things may take up some of my thoughts, yet my soul is to be in a constant state of being in Christ, so that if I am caught at any moment, I am in Him. At any hour, if anyone should say to me, “Now, are you saved?” I may be able still to say, “Yes.” And if they ask me for an evidence of it, I may, without saying so, prove it to them by the fact that I am acting like a man who is in Christ, who has Christ in him, has had his nature changed by receiving Christ’s nature, and has Christ to be his one end and aim. I suppose, also, that walking signifies *progress*. So walk in him—proceed from Divine Grace to Grace—run forward until you reach the uttermost limit of knowledge that man can have concerning our Beloved. “As you have received Him walk in Him.”   
But now I want you to notice just this. It says, “Walk you *in Him*.” Oh, I cannot attempt to enter into the mystery of this text—“Walk *in* Him!” You know if a man has to cross a river, he fords it quickly and is out of it again at once. But you are to suppose a person walking *in* a certain element always, *in* Christ. Just as we walk in the air, so am I to walk in Christ. Not sometimes, now and then coming to Him and going away from Him, but walking in Him as my *element*. Can you comprehend that? Not a soul here can make anything out of that but the most silly jargon, except the man who, having received the inner spiritual life, understands what it is to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.   
Dear Friends, in trying to open up that point just for a moment, let us notice what this walking in Christ must mean. As Christ was at first when we received Him *the only ground of our faith—*so as long as we live, we are to stand to the same point. Did you not sing the other day when you first came to Him—   
*“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,   
But Jesus Christ is my All in All”?*Well, that is how you are to continue to the end. We commence our faith with—   
*“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to the Cross I cling.”*When you are old with honors, when you are covered with fame, when you have served your Master well, still come in just the same way with—   
*“A guilty weak and helpless worm,   
On Christ’s kind arms I fall,   
He is my strength and righteousness,   
My Jesus and my All”*Let not your experience, your sanctification, your graces, your attainments, come in between you and Christ. But just as you took Him to be the only pillar of your hope at first, so let Him be even to the last.   
You received Christ, again, as *the substance of your faith*. The infidel laughed at you, and said you had nothing to trust to. But your faith made Christ real to you. Well, now, just as the first day when you came to Jesus you no more doubted the reality of Christ than you did your own existence, so walk in Him. Well can I remember that first moment when these eyes looked to Christ! Ah, there was never anything so true to me as those bleeding hands, and that crown of thorns on His head. I wish it were always so, and indeed, it ought to be. As you have received Christ really, so keep on realizing and finding substance in Him.   
And remember that day, Beloved, when Christ became to us *the joy of our souls*? Home, friends, health, wealth, comforts—all lost their luster that day when He appeared, just as stars are hidden by the light of the sun. He was the only Lord and giver of life’s best bliss, the one well of living water springing up unto everlasting life. I know that the first day it mattered not to me whether the day itself was gloomy or bright. I had found Christ! That was enough for me. He was my Savior. He was my All. I do think that that day I could have stood upon the fire wood of Smithfield to burn for Him readily enough.   
Well now, just as you received Him at first as your only joy, so receive Him still, walking in Him, making Him the source, the center, yes, and the circumference, too, of all your souls’ range of delight, having your all in Him. So, Beloved, that day when we received Him, we received Him as *the object of our love*. Oh, how we loved Christ then! Had we met Him that day, we would have broken the alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it upon His head. We would have washed His feet with our tears, and wiped them with the hairs of our head.   
Ah, Jesus, when I first received You, I thought I should have behaved far better than I have. I thought I would spend, and be spent for You, and should never dishonor You or turn aside from my faith and devotedness and zeal. But ah, Brethren, we have not come up to the standard of our text—walking in Him as we have received Him. He has not been by us so well beloved as we dreamed He would have been. I take it, then, to be the meaning of our text, as Christ Jesus the Lord was at the first All in All to you, so let Him be while life shall last.   
II. I shall be very brief upon THE ADVOCACY OF THIS PRINCIPLE, for surely you need no urgent persuasion to cleave unto such a Lord as yours. In advocating this principle, I would say, first of all, suppose, my Brethren, you and I, having been saved by Christ, should now begin to walk in someone else, what then? Why, *what dishonor to our Lord*! Here is a man who came to Christ and says he found salvation in Him. But after relying upon the Lord some half-a-dozen years, he came to find it was not a proper principle, and so now he has begun to walk by feelings, to walk by sight, to walk by philosophy, to walk by carnal wisdom. If such a case could be found, what discredit would it bring upon our Holy Leader and Captain!   
But I am certain no such instance will be found in you, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Have you not up till now found your Lord to be a compassionate and generous Friend to you, and has not simple faith in Him given you all the peace your spirit could desire? I pray you, then, unless you would stain His glory in the dust, as you have received Christ, so walk in Him.   
Besides, *what reason have you to make a change*? Has there been any argument in the past? Has not Christ proved Himself all-sufficient! He appeals to you today—“Have I been a wilderness unto you?” When your soul has simply trusted Christ, have you ever been confounded? When you have dared to come as a guilty sinner, and believed in Him, have you ever been ashamed? Very well, then, let the past urge you to walk in Him. And as for *the present*, can that compel you to leave Christ? Oh, when we are hard beset with this world or with the severer trials within the Church, we find it such a sweet thing to come back! Pillow our head upon the bosom of our Savior. This is the joy we have today—that if we are in trial—we are saved in Him. And if we find this today to be enough, why should we think of changing!   
I will not forswear the sunlight till I find a better, nor leave my Lord until a brighter Lover shall appear. And, since this can never be, I will hold Him with a grasp immortal, and bind His name as a seal upon my arm. As for *the future*, can you suggest anything which can arise that shall render it necessary for you to tack about, or strike sail, or go with another captain in another ship? I think not. Suppose life to be long—He changes not. Suppose you die—is it not written that, “neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”?   
You are poor. What better than to have Christ who can make you rich in faith? Suppose you are sick. What more do you want than Christ to make your bed in your sickness? Suppose you should be maltreated and mocked at, and slandered for His sake—what better do you want then to have Him as a Friend who sticks closer than a brother? In life, in death, in judgment—you cannot conceive anything that can arise in which you would require more than Christ bestows.   
But, dear Friends, it may be that you are tempted by something else to change your course for a time. Now what is it? Is it the wisdom of this world, the cunning devices and discoveries of man? Is it that which our Apostle mentions as philosophy? The wise men of the world have persuaded you to begin questioning. They have urged you to put the mysteries of God to the test of common sense, reason and so forth, as they call it, and not lean on the inspiration of God’s Word. Ah, well, Beloved, it is wisdom, I suppose, which philosophy offers you. Well, but have you not that in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? You received Christ at first, I thought, as being made of God unto you wisdom, and sanctification, and righteousness, and so on. Well, will you cast Him off when you have already more than all the wisdom which this philosophy offers?   
Is it *ceremonies* that tempt you? Has the priest told you that you ought to attend to these, and then you would have another ground of confidence? Well, but you have that in Christ. If there is anything in the circumcision of the Jews, you have that, for you are circumcised in Him. If there is anything in Baptism—as some think that to be a saving ordinance—you have been buried with Him in Baptism. You have that. Do you want life? Your life is hid with Him. Do you want death? You are dead with Christ, and buried with Him. Do you want resurrection? He has raised you up with Him. Do you want Heaven? He has make you sit together in heavenly places in Him.   
Getting Christ, you have all that everything else can offer you. Therefore be not tempted from this hope of your calling, but as you have received Christ, so walk in Him. And then, further, do you not know that your Jesus is the Lord from Heaven? *What can your heart desire* beyond God? God is infinite. You cannot want more than the infinite. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Having Christ, you have God. And having God, you have everything. Well might the Apostle add to that sentence, “And you are complete in Him!”   
Well, then, if you are complete in Christ, why should you be beguiled by the bewitcheries of this world to want something besides Christ? If resting upon Him, God is absolutely yours, and you are, therefore, full to the brim with all that your largest capacity can desire, oh, why should you thus be led astray, like foolish children, to seek after another confidence and another trust? Oh, come back, you Wanderer! Come you back to this solid foundation and sing once again with us—   
*“On Christ the solid rock I stand,   
All other ground is sinking sand.”*III. And now, last of all, a few words BY WAY OF APPLICATION “So walk you in Him.” One of the first applications shall be made with regard to some who complain of a want of communion, or rather, of those of whom we ought to complain, since they injure us all by their distance from Christ.   
There are some of you who never have much communion with Christ. You are members of the Church and very decent people, I dare say, in your way. But you do not have communion with Christ. Ask some professors—“Do you ever have communion with Christ?” They would be obliged to say—“Well, I do not know that my life is inconsistent. I do not think anybody could blame me for any wrong act towards my fellow man. But if you come to that, whether I have ever had communion with Christ, I am compelled to say that I have had it now and then, but it is very seldom—it is like the angels’ visits—few and far between.”  
Now, Brethren, you have received Christ, have you not? Then the application of the principle is as you have received Him, so walk in Him. If it were worth while for you to come to Him at first, then it is worth while for you always to keep to Him. If it were really a safe thing for you to come to Him and say, “Jesus, you are the way,” then it is a safe thing for you to do now. And if that were the foundation of blessedness to you, to come simply to Christ, then it will be the fountain of blessedness to you to do the same now. Come, then, to Him *now*.   
If you were foolish in trusting Him at the first, then you are wise in leaving off doing so now. If you were wise, however, in approaching to Christ years gone by, you are foolish in not standing by Christ now. Come, then, let the remembrance of your marriage unto the Lord Jesus rebuke you! And if you have lost your fellowship with Jesus, come again to His dear body wounded for your sake and say, “Lord Jesus, help me from this time forth as I have received You, day by day to walk in You.”   
There are many of you who complain of *a want of comfort*. You are not so comfortable as you would like to be and why? Why, you have sinned. Yes, yes, but how did you receive Christ. As a saint? “No, no,” you say, “I came to Christ as a sinner.” Come to Him as a sinner now, then. “Oh, but I feel so guilty.” Just so, but what was your hope at first? Why, that guilty though you were, He had made an atonement and you trusted in Him. Well, you are still guilty—do the same as you did at first—walk in Him, and I cannot imagine a person without comfort who continually makes this the strain of his life, to rest on Christ as a poor sinner, just as he did at first.   
Why, Lord, You know the devil often says to me, “You are no saint.” Well, then, if I am not a saint, yet I am a sinner—and it is written—“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Then—  
*“Just as I am and waiting not,  
To rid my soul of one foul spot,   
To Him whose blood can cleanse each blot,   
O Lamb of God,I come, I come.”*Why, you cannot help having comfort if you walk with your Surety and Substitute as you did at the first, resting on Him and not in feelings, nor experience, nor graces, nor anything of your own—living and resting alone on Him who is made of God unto you all that your soul requires.   
There is yet another thing. There are many Christians whose lives really *are not consistent*. I cannot understand this if they are walking in Christ. In fact, if a man could completely walk in Christ, he would walk in perfect holiness. We hear an instance, perhaps, of a little shopkeeper who puffs and exaggerates as other shopkeepers do—he does not exactly tell a lie, but something very near it. Now I want to know whether that man was walking in Christ when he did that. If he had said to himself, “Now I am in Christ,” do you think he would have done it?   
We hear of another who is constantly impatient, always troubled, fretting, mournful. I want to know whether that man is really walking in Christ as he walked at first, when he is doubting the goodness, the Providence, the tenderness of God. Surely he is not! I have heard of hard-hearted professors who take a Christian Brother by the throat with, “Pay me what you owe.” Do you think they are walking in Christ when they do that? We hear of others, when their Brothers have need, shut up the heart of their compassion—are mean and stingy. Are they walking in Christ when they do that?   
Why, if a man walks in Christ, then he so acts as Christ would act. For Christ being in him, his hope, his love, his joy, his life—he is the reflex of the image of Christ. He is the glass into which Christ looks. And then the image of Christ is reflected, and men say of that man, “He is like his Master. He lives in Christ.” Oh, I know, dear Brethren, if we lived now, as we did the first day we came to Christ, we should live very differently from what we do. How we felt towards Him that day! We would have given all we had for Him! How we felt towards sinners that day! Lad that I was, I wanted to preach and—  
*“Tell to sinners round,   
What a dear Savior I had found.”*How we felt towards God that day! When we were on our knees, what pleading there was with Him! What a nearness of access to Him in prayer! Oh, how different! How different with some now! This world has with rude hands brushed the bloom from the young fruit. Is it true that flowers of Divine Grace, like the flowers of nature, die in the autumn of our piety? As we all get older, ought we to be more worldly? Should it be that our early love, which was the love of our espousals, dies away? Forgive, O Lord, this evil, and turn us anew unto You—   
*“Return, O holy Dove! return,  
Sweet messenger of rest!   
We hate the sins that made You mourn,   
And drove You from our breast.   
The dearest idol we have known,   
Whatever that idol be,   
Help us to tear it from Your throne,   
And worship only You.   
So shall our walk be close with God,   
Calm and serene our frame—  
So purer light shall mark the road   
That leads us to the Lamb.”*“As you have received Him walk in Him,” and if you have not received Him, oh, poor Sinner, remember He is free and full—full to give you all you need—and free to give it even to you. Let the verse we sung be an invitation to you— *“This fountain,though rich, from chargeis quite clear;   
The poorer the wretch, the more welcome here—   
Come, needy and guilty; come, loathsome and bare;   
Though leprous and filthy, come just as you are.”*Trust in God’s anointed—that is receive Him—and then, having trusted Him, continue still to trust Him. May His Spirit enable you to do it and to His name shall be glory forever and ever.

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÷Col 2.12

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM  
NO. 381

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 1861, BY REV. HUGH STOWELL BROWN,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who has raised Him from the dead.”** *Col 2:12***.**

IT is the firm belief of almost all Christian people that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, before He left the earth, instituted two ordinances, namely, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—ordinances which were to be observed by His disciples throughout every age on to the end of the world. Perhaps, indeed, I ought to say that all Christian people without any exception whatever, acknowledge the appointment to which I have just referred. Even the Society of Friends, although it rejects the outward and visible signs, nevertheless believes in those great principles which those signs are intended to symbolize, viz., the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the communion of the soul with Christ.

By almost all Christians in every age of the world, the observance of the outward sign as well as the recognition of the inward grace has been regarded as part of the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this occasion we have to do only with the ordinance of Baptism and to this I wish to draw your candid and careful attention. The ground upon which this ordinance is founded is the command of our Savior addressed to His disciples just before He ascended to Heaven when He said, “Go you, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Now if this is a command of Christ, (and I am not aware that the genuineness of the passage in which it appears has ever been called into question), then, of course, it is the duty of all Christian people according to their convictions as to the nature and meaning of this command to observe and to maintain it on to the end of time.

I think it may also be asserted that with the exception of the Society of Friends, all Christians regard the ordinance of Baptism as one in which water is to be employed in some way or other and very rightly so, because if Baptism is altogether inward and spiritual—the Baptism of the Holy Spirit—then we must believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Baptism which one man cannot administer to another. The very fact that the Baptism mentioned in the Scripture is a Baptism which one man can administer to another, is sufficient to prove that in this Baptism there is some outward, visible, material rite, ceremony, or ordinance which Christian people are to observe.

Thus far, with the exception of the Society of Friends, I believe we are all agreed that the ordinance of Baptism does imply the use and application of water in some way or other. So far we all, or nearly all, travel together. But at this point, the body of Christians to which we belong feel compelled to pursue a different course from that which is adopted by their

Brethren. The very name we bear indicates that there is something or other in connection with the ordinance of Baptism in which we do not agree with the great majority of Christian people. And for the information of such as may not be thoroughly well informed upon this point, (and I by no means cast the slightest slur or rejection on any man’s intelligence if I suppose him to be a little uninformed upon this point, for very extensive ignorance with regard to it prevails) I shall in a very few words try to explain the difference or differences which exist—between us and other Christians upon this matter.

The majority of Christian people believe that so far as the outward rite is concerned, the conditions of the ordinance are fulfilled when water, in however small a quantity, is poured or sprinkled upon the candidate. We, on the other hand, believe that the outward conditions of the ordinance are not fulfilled unless the candidate is wholly immersed in water. Again, (and this is by far the most important point of difference), the very great majority of Christian people think infant children are fit and proper subjects for this ordinance. We, on the other hand, believe that none are fit and proper subjects for the ordinance of Baptism, excepting such as really believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and their King.

You will perceive that the difference resolves itself into two questions—a question with regard to the mode of this ordinance and a question with reference to the subjects. These two questions, “How ought Baptism to be administered?” and, “to whom ought Baptism to be administered?”—these are the questions to which we in our consciences feel compelled to offer answers which differ very materially from those which are given by other Christian people. Again let me explain this matter and set in as plain terms as possible. We believe that this ordinance should never be administered apart from the entire immersion of the candidate in water and we also believe that none should be candidates for this ordinance excepting those who avow their faith in Christ.

And here let me observe that the very common notion that we are in the habit of practicing adult Baptism is utterly a mistake. We do not contend for the Baptism of adults. We contend for the Baptism of believers. Show us a child however young who believes in Christ and we gladly accept him. But if a man as old as Methuselah were to come to us in unbelief, we should say to him, “Sir, your age certainly entitles you to our respect, but it gives you no manner of claim to Baptism as ordained by Jesus Christ.”

But now, perhaps, someone will exclaim, perhaps in scorn, perhaps in great surprise, “Who are you that you presume to differ from the general verdict of the Christian world? Who are you that you so pertinaciously maintain these crotchety notions of yours, when all the world is against you and when there is not only the decision of the Church of Rome, against which we should ourselves rebel, but the voice of the Church of England, the voice of the Church of Scotland the voice of the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the Congregationalists, all against you and the most able Divines of the Christian world all testifying that you are in error? Who are you, that you should thus set up your opinions against everybody else? Call a solemn assembly—canvass the Christian world and certainly for one hand held up in favor of your opinions there will be a thousand held up to their decided and utter condemnation.”

Well, we do not choose to put it to the vote in this way. We have not such entire faith in the infallibility of majorities as to submit our religious convictions to any such tribunal. If the Copernican system of astronomy had been put to the vote two hundred and fifty years ago, it would have had a smaller minority than our views would have if put to the vote now. If the doctrine of justification by faith had been put to the vote four hundred years ago, the “Nos” would have had it. If the Truth of Christianity were now submitted to the vote of the entire world, there would be somewhere about five hundred millions against it. And further, let the voters be all Christian people, let the suffrage be confined to those who really believe in Christ and then if you as a Church of England man, or you as a Methodist, or you as a Congregationalist, or you as a Presbyterian, submit your views of Church-government and some other things, depend upon it you would as certainly be defeated as we should be if we submitted Baptism to the decision of such a council as that.

I hope that no one is so silly as to suppose that we are necessarily in error because we are in the minority—for let this be borne in mind— especially by the worshipper of majorities, that every great Truth was at one time held by a very small minority, if indeed it is not held by a small minority now. Every great Truth, whether in the province of religion, or in the domain of science, or in the region of politics, is at first and for a very long time held by small minorities. And in all the currency of Proverbs, there is no more pernicious maxim than that, “what everybody says must be true.”

But of course you will ask our reasons for maintaining this opinion. I think we have just as good a right to ask your reasons for maintaining the opposite opinion. Galileo had just as good a right to ask his opponents why they believed the world did not move, as they to ask him why he believed it did. However you ask for our reasons and I shall endeavor to give those reasons as clearly and as briefly as I can. We ought to have good reasons, because I can assure you it has never been much to our secular comfort and advantage that we hold those views. These views have never done us very much good, considered in a merely secular or worldly sense. We are not bound to them by any golden chain. They have not been made plain and clear and attractive to us by rich benefices and comfortable livings.

Our opinions are not endowed with prelacies and pretender stalls, with manses and glebes and royal bounties. Thank God, whatever people may choose to say of us, they cannot say we are Baptists for the love of filthy lucre. One thing is certain, “the root of all evil” is not likely to draw much nourishment from the soil of Baptist ministerial stipends. We must of course state our reasons and I say they ought to be somewhat substantial reasons. Well, then, we go on this principle mark you—that the only appeal is to the Word of God.

This is a principle in which every holy and sound-hearted Protestant must agree with us. It is his principle as much as ours and it is the only principle that will save him from all the errors and superstitions of

Romanism. So that, taking the matter into the court of God’s Word only, it signifies very little to us what may have been said by such-and-such a council, or such-and-such a Church, or such-and-such a reverend father—it greatly simplifies the matter when it’s understood that we intend to submit this question to the Word of God and to the Word of God only.

And I say to every Protestant here that he must accept the principle and act upon it. If he begins to refer to fathers and churches and councils, well then, let him take care. He may rely upon it—on such a principle he will not be able to stand for one moment. If he thinks with such weapons to vanquish us, let him rest assured that he will very soon be vanquished himself by the same. It may be that the charge from such ordnance shall destroy us, but depend upon it, the recoil will destroy the man who has the temerity to fire it.

This principle, then, will be agreed in by every Protestant, excepting those who in these days are beginning to protest Scripture itself. But every sound-hearted, honest-minded Protestant will go with us in saying that the Word of God is the only tribunal to which we can go. This being the case, let us see how the matter stands.

It is alleged by us, then, that in the ordinance of Baptism the candidate should be wholly immersed in water. And now, if we were disposed and if we recognized any other authority than Scripture, we might refer to the law of the Church of England, which is most distinctly to the effect that excepting in cases of certified weakness, immersion shall be the mode of administering this ordinance and the Church of England man, at all events, has nothing to say against the adoption of this practice. It is his practice as much as ours. It is his law as much as ours. His prayer book tells him we are right.

The large fonts, three feet in diameter, which he sees in so many parish churches, tell him we are right. And he knows that in this respect we are the only faithful Church of England people in this land. We might also refer to the testimony of the ancient Church and the practice of the olden time, with regard to which it may be said with perfect certainty that in the first ages immersion was the commonly accepted mode. But of course we appeal to the Scriptures and appealing to the Scriptures, we find that Baptism is, as our text informs us, a burial and resurrection with Christ— that it is a sign and symbol of the believer’s participation in Christ’s burial and resurrection—and this, I think as plainly as possible, shows us what the mode was in ancient times.

This, indeed, is generally admitted by Divines who still maintain that this mode is not binding upon Christians at the present time. But surely, if Baptism is to be a representation of burial and resurrection there must be something in the ordinance itself which shall be suggestive of such a Truth. And then again, we appeal to the meaning of the word. This word Baptism has not been translated in our Scriptures excepting in one or two instances, in which it appears in the form of the word “wash” or “washing,” and in these cases the idea of immersion, if not absolutely required, is at all events perfectly admissible and involves no incongruity. And if you search the Scriptures through you will not find a single passage in which this word, whether it is employed literally or figuratively, does not suggest, or may not suggest the idea of immersion.

When we consider that Philip and the eunuch “went down both of them into the water.” That our Savior “went up straightway out of the water” after John had baptized Him. That John “was baptizing near Salim because there was much water there,” I think it is very evident that something more than aspersion, or pouring of water must be implied. And if we consult trustworthy authorities for the meaning of this word we shall find that in all cases it either may or must imply the idea of immersion. I lately read a very valuable paper by a most scholarly Divine who tells us that he has thoroughly investigated every instance in which the word can be found whether in the fathers or in the classics.

He gives us upwards of two hundred cases in the great majority of which the word must mean immersion and in every one of which it may have and probably really has, that signification. Indeed, almost all scholarly men are agreed that this is the meaning of the word and not only so, but also that this was the mode that was adopted in the Apostolic age. These things are not disputed, or are scarcely disputed. Men do ask why should you adhere to this mode? And that is a question we shall have to consider presently. But they scarcely dispute anywhere that this mode was ordained by Christ and practiced in the Apostolic age. And therefore, if you ask, “Why do you immerse in Baptism?” I say because Baptism must, in the very nature of things, be a representation setting forth figuratively the burial and resurrection of Christ and because to immerse and to immerse only, is the meaning of this word baptize.

But again, our more important difference with our Christian Brethren is that we decline to accept as candidates for the ordinance all but those who avow their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now here, although the practice of Christendom is very much against us, I think that even in that practice there are some points that tell very strongly in our favor. For example Baptism is called a Sacrament. This word is scarcely recognized among us I believe, but still let us examine it. Baptism is regarded as a Sacrament. What is a Sacrament? I suppose it is an oath. Now would you administer an oath to an infant child? Is there common sense in such a procedure as that? You would provoke laughter if you were to take your infant child before a Justice of the Peace and there administer to it an oath to the effect that he should to the end of his days be a faithful subject and servant of the queen.

And is there anything more rational than this, when you take an infant child to a minister of God’s Word, that to that child an oath may be administered by which it shall swear fealty to the Captain of our Salvation? But you say it is not to the infant that the oath is administered at all. It is to the sponsors. Well then, I want to know to whom the Sacrament is administered. The oath is administered to the sponsors. The Baptism is then administered to the sponsors, for the Baptism and the oath are one. But it would seem as though the ordinance were divided. The water is administered to the child and the oath is administered to the sponsors. There is something rather like confusion here.  
If Baptism is a Sacrament and a Sacrament an oath, then in administering Baptism to a child, you are administering an oath to a child. But surely every oath ought to be administered to such and such only as understand the nature of an oath and also give a solemn assent to the propositions that are embodied in it. And thus if the word Sacrament is to be applied to Baptism at all, I accept it then and I submit that it protests and protests most strongly against the administration of this ordinance to any except to those who understand and assent to the principles which are connected with it. Although our appeal is to Scripture, our PaedoBaptist friends must really not suppose that the testimony of the Church is all in their favor, for certainly for two or three centuries if not more, the Baptism of infant children was not the general practice of the Christian church.

It was opposed by Tortellini at the latter end of the second century or the beginning of the third. And at a far later date than this, we find Baptism administered to persons of mature years. I do not wish to press into our service such cases as that of Constantine, who was baptized late in life. He was born a heathen and he appears to have continued practically a heathen of the very worst stamp to the last. The mistake in his case was not that he was baptized so late, but that he was baptized at all. As he was baptized during his last illness, his Baptism I presume was clinical and therefore administered by aspersion and those who are in favor of this mode are perfectly welcome to this sprinkled Pagan.

I am very glad that the ordinance in its Scriptural form was never disgraced by having Constantine for a subject. But we find that several of the most eminent and pious fathers of the Church were not baptized until they had arrived at maturity and were thoroughly Christian men. In the fourth century flourished Gregory of Nazianzum, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Chrysostom and Augustine. These eminent men, who were afterwards such great theologians, were all of them the sons of Christian parents, at least of Christian mothers and yet not one of them was baptized until mature age and until each of them had strong religious convictions. In fact, none of them were baptized until they were truly converted to Jesus Christ.

The case of Gregory peculiarly in point. Gregory of Nazianzum was the son of a Christian bishop. His pious mother Nona, dedicated him to God from his very birth and yet when was he baptized? When he was thirty years old! The instance of Augustine is perhaps still more remarkable. Augustine was the object of his pious mother’s deepest solicitude, his conversion was the thing nearest and dearest to her heart and yet she did not have him baptized. When he was a grown-up lad, he was attacked with a very dangerous illness and expressed a strong desire for Baptism and yet the ordinance was deferred and the great Augustine was not baptized until he was a man thirty-two years old and was fully imbued with the knowledge and spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

Now mark you, I do not say that these cases prove that there was no such thing as infant Baptism in the fourth century and it is for no such purpose I adduce them, but they do prove this—that Christian mothers such as Nona and Monica and Anthusa—Christian women of the very highest intelligence and piety, did not in that age deem it necessary that their infant children should be baptized—but they left the matter to be one of personal profession when their children should have a faith to profess.

But still we would appeal to the Scriptures and when we come to consult God’s Word, strange as it may appear, there is not one passage from the beginning to the end which indicates the Baptism of any but professed believers in Christ. It is true that households were baptized and it is said that there might have infant children in those households. It is a sufficient answer to this to say that there might not have been any infants in those households. As to the Philippian jailer, we read that, “he believed in God with all his house.” As to the house of Stephanas, we read, “they had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints”—and, as to Lydia, there is not the slightest evidence that she was either a wife or mother.

And in fact, so far as historical narrative is concerned, there is not a single incident in Scripture that leads us to suppose that any but professed believers in Christ were baptized. It would have been very strange if such an incident had turned up anywhere, seeing that our Lord’s commission runs in this order—“Go you, teach all nations, baptizing them. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” And we read that Peter says, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you.” And again, he says, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” Does it not appear that he would have anticipated an objection and would have allowed an objection if there had been no evidence of conversion to God?

And Paul says, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Is not this the work of an intelligent and believing man? Or to come to our text, Paul says that we are, “Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.” The meaning of this passage seems to be this—We are buried and risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, through faith in God’s operation, God’s work, energy and power, as manifested in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. That is to say those persons evidently were baptized, buried and raised with Christ through their faith in the fact that God’s energy or power had raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The fact of Christ’s resurrection is evidently attached to Baptism here.

And the Apostle Peter says, “Baptism does also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” That is to say, those persons who have been baptized are persons who have the answer of a good conscience towards God through Christ’s resurrection—through faith in Christ’s resurrection they now have the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins. And so faith in the resurrection of Christ, is represented as an essential and indeed the chief element of Christian Baptism.

These then, are some of our reasons for holding these views. If you ask why we immerse, we say, “Because this is the undisputed—or all but undisputed—sole meaning of the Word and because apart from immersion, there is no sign of burial and resurrection with Christ.” And if you ask, “Why do you baptize only those that believe?” We say, “Because we can

discover no trace in God’s Word of the baptism of any other and we think, that as Baptism is a profession of a man’s faith in Christ, this profession ought never to be made excepting by such as really are the subjects of the faith that is thus professed.”

And now, if anything can be advanced to show that any other but immersion is really the meaning of the word and if any case can be had from the Scriptures, either directly or by implication, showing that any but believer’s were baptized, we give this matter up. We have no interest to subserve but the cause of Truth. Of course many objections are urged against these views of ours. To some of these objections, for we shall not have time to notice them all, I shall now briefly direct attention.

I have heard it said by some and I dare say you have heard it too, that the administration of this ordinance by immersion is scarcely consistent with decency. With decency! There are some people in the world, who I suppose would advocate the omission of the first chapter from the Epistle to the Romans. There are some people who must think it would be a very proper thing to blot the Seventh Commandment from the Decalogue, for it is scarcely decent. And they ought to go in for an expurgated edition of the Sermon on the Mount and that I hope would satisfy them.

My dear Friends, Christ ordained and his Apostles practiced this ordinance of immersion—most certainly they did. There is no dispute about that. There is dispute whether the ordinance is obligatory in this form at the present day, but really there is no dispute that this was commanded and that this was done. Do you think that our Lord Jesus Christ would ever have sanctioned anything that bordered in the slightest degree on indecency? I have only one word to say to such objectors and it is this, “To the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

But it is a strong point, or supposed to be a strong point, that on the day of Pentecost three thousand people were baptized and how could they all be immersed. Well, why not? The only objections I can imagine are these—a lack of water and a lack of time. But to suppose that there was a deficient water supply—to suppose this from all that we know and especially from all that we do not know about ancient Jerusalem, appears to me to be a great absurdity. And as to the want of time—if the Apostles alone had baptized these three thousand, there certainly would be something rather formidable in the objection.

But it would seem that the Apostles were not in the habit of baptizing many and that they often gave this work to others—and on that occasion there might have been a hundred administrators of Baptism, those who were first baptized might baptize others and in this way the administration to the whole three thousand might very easily be accomplished before the sun went down upon the day of Pentecost. “Ah, but,” say some, “there is a passage in the first Epistle to the Corinthians that you cannot get over. It is said that the Israelites ‘were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.’ How can that be a case of immersion?”

Well, I might ask you, how could it be a case of anything else? Undoubtedly it was a case of immersion. When you think of the cloud, you must not think of a small pillar of cloud suspended high above the people and always going before them. It is written in one of the Psalms, “He spread His cloud for a covering.” And they passed under the cloud, the channel of the Red Sea, with the waters piled up on either hand—this constituted the huge baptistery for the people and the cloud was the element in which they were baptized. As plainly as possible it was a case of immersion in the cloud.

But again, there are many who say, “Well, after all what does it really matter—if a man has been baptized by the Spirit of God and is really regenerated and born again and has his sins washed away by the blood of Christ—the outward and visible sign is a thing of very little importance.” Well, if it is such a matter of indifference whether you adopt this or that mode, I should say it would be as well to follow the Society of Friends and adopt neither one nor the other. But you do believe there is some external rite—well, then—surely the external rite should be that which does set forth figuratively the very Truth intended by the ordinance. In the language of symbols, forms are everything—forms give those symbols all their meaning and therefore it is not altogether an unimportant matter that Baptism, signifying burial and resurrection with Christ, should indicate this even in its very form and mode.

But there are also objections to our baptizing none but believers. Infants, it is said, should be baptized, not that there is any positive and direct proof of this in God’s Word, still it may be inferred. For instance. “They brought infants to Jesus.” What did they bring them for? That He might put his hand upon them and pray for them. Yet it is inferred by many that our Savior was in the habit of baptizing infants because they brought infants to Him that He might touch them and bless them! The opposite inference is the one I should be prepared to draw, for if our Savior were in the habit of baptizing infants the disciples certainly would not have rebuked those that brought the infants to Jesus, because such an act would have been quite a matter of course.

On this incident, Jeremy Taylor remarks, “To infer from such a passage as this that infants should be baptized only proves that there is a great want of better arguments.” But again—it is said Baptism came in the place of circumcision and since infants were circumcised, infants ought to be baptized. Now it appears to me to be altogether a matter of assumption that Baptism came in the place of circumcision. There is nothing in God’s Word that states this. And let me particularly call attention to this fact. It is well known to every reader of the Acts and the Epistles that a great controversy arose in the early church with reference to this matter of circumcision—certain men went down to Antioch and said to the Christians there, “Unless you are circumcised you cannot be saved.”

The church at Jerusalem met to consider this matter and they sent their decision. Now, if Baptism is come in the place of circumcision, of course the way in which common sense would settle the question would be this, “No, you need not be circumcised, because you have been baptized and Baptism has come in the place of circumcision.” But in the decision which the church at Jerusalem sent to the church at Antioch there is not the slightest allusion to any such substitution. Then again, Paul was perpetually arguing against those who were insisting upon the importance of circumcision—if Baptism is substituted for that institution, Paul’s short and easy method of silencing every objector would have been this, “No, these people have been baptized and that is the Christian circumcision.”

But what does Paul say?—we read what he says in the verse which precedes our text. He says, “In whom”—that is, in Christ—“In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” Now observe, “In whom you are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” The circumcision of Christ is the Christian circumcision, is that which has come in the place of the old circumcision and this Christian circumcision is a circumcision, “made without hands.”

Will any man in his senses say that this is Baptism? Christian circumcision is something that is accomplished without human agency. Baptism is not an ordinance made or administered without hands. Moreover, he says, with reference to this matter, that we are circumcised “in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh,” which is certainly the work of an intelligent, conscientious, believing and God-fearing man. In one word, if you want to know what the Christian equivalent for circumcision under the new dispensation is, it is conversion to God. It is this and it is nothing else.

If Baptism has come in the place of circumcision, on what principle then did Paul circumcise Timothy? If this idea of the substitution of Baptism for circumcision is correct, then ought not Paul to have said, “In Christ Jesus circumcision avails nothing, neither uncircumcision, but Baptism?” Ought he not to have said, “We are the circumcised—we who have been baptized”? But what he does say is this, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but the keeping of the Commandments of God,” and, “We are the congregation who worship God in one Spirit and who rejoice in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”

Evidently, then, those who have received the Christian circumcision are those who keep the Commandments of God, who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus—and these conditions are certainly applicable to none excepting those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore I would say there seems to be no fairness in arguing from the one institution to the other. Only consider this fact, that in a controversy which this supposed idea of Baptism having come in the place of circumcision would have settled in a moment, there is no allusion to such mode of settling the question and I think that we are led to infer, with the most absolute certainty, that it is altogether a baseless assumption that circumcision is represented by Baptism.

No, in the Christian dispensation, if there is any equivalent, any succession to the circumcision of the old covenant, it is conversion to God—it is the circumcision of the heart, it is the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh. That is the Christian circumcision. But it will be said by some, “You make a great deal too much of this ordinance of Baptism.” Well, I am free to confess that there may be here and there a good Brother who makes rather too much of this ordinance. Yet this I certainly can say, from a somewhat extensive knowledge of our denomination, that in almost every case you will find that the ordinance of Baptism is held by us in a most thorough and lowly subordination to the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the work of atonement by His sacrifice and death, to the influence and the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, to the necessity of repentance and of faith, to the importance of a life of personal holiness and to every other great principle of the holy faith which we profess.

I do not think that we are fairly charged with making too much of this ordinance. When we say of this ordinance that it regenerates the soul— when we say that herein persons are made “members of Christ, children of God and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven”—when we rush with all haste to baptize the sick and the dying and when we refuse to accord to those who die unbaptized, the rites, the decencies, the charities of Christian burial—then tell us, for indeed we shall deserve to be told—that we do most monstrously exaggerate the importance of this ordinance!

But you shall go through the length and breadth of this realm and you shall visit all the Baptist churches in the States of America and on the continent of Europe and nowhere will you find such sentiments or such practices prevailing among the Baptist people. I trust we make no more of this ordinance and no less than is made of it in God’s Word. We do not baptize our own infant children and this, I think, is evidence enough that we do not very grossly exaggerate the importance of this institution.

Still you say, “You do not regard it as essential to salvation and therefore why do you make this the ground of separation from your Brethren?” My dear Friend, are you a Congregationalist? You do not believe that your Congregational polity is essential to salvation—why then do you not join the Episcopal communion? Are you a Methodist? You do not think the Conference is to save your soul—why do you not return to the bosom of the Established Church? Are you a Free Church of Scotland man? You will admit that people can be saved in the old Church yet. Then why did you make such a fuss about that Disruption business? I do not blame you for the Disruption, not by any means—perhaps you did what was perfectly right.

A thing may not be essential and yet it may be very far from unimportant. We cannot but regard infant Baptism as the main root of the superstitious and destructive dogma of baptismal regeneration, to which as Protestants we are opposed. We cannot but regard infant baptism as the chief cornerstone of State Church, to which as Dissenters we are opposed. We cannot but regard infant Baptism as unscriptural and to everything that is unscriptural we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, must be opposed. And we do trust that all who differ from us and however widely they may differ, will still admit that we are only doing what is right in maintaining what we believe to be the Truth of God with reference to this matter.

Up to now it has been in disgrace and scorn and ridicule and oftentimes in persecution that these principles have been held. Up to now we have been a sect everywhere spoken against. Probably the first martyr burnt in England for religion and certainly the last, was a Baptist. And others had trials of cruel mocking and scourging, yes and of bonds and

imprisonments—and became destitute, afflicted and tormented. We cannot glory in our numbers, we cannot glory in our power, we cannot glory in our wealth. But we can glory in the faith and constancy by which those who went before us were enabled by Divine grace to sustain the infliction of the most grievous wrongs—wrongs which were all the more keenly felt because they were received at the hands of fellow-Christians, fellowProtestants and even fellow-Puritans.

Up to now we have been few in number and have been oftentimes violently and bitterly opposed—nor do I think that there is now any very brilliant prospect of our rising to denominational greatness and basking in the sunshine of popular applause. And indeed, when I see what the effect of such greatness and applause has been upon some Christian churches, I am disposed to say, “God defend us from power and popularity, for these are more dangerous foes than all the contumely and persecution and straitened circumstances with which we have had to struggle in the times gone by.”

I do hope and verily believe that we have a far purer object in view than mere denominational aggrandizement and that we shall be content, as heretofore we have been content, come evil report or good, to have the testimony of a clear conscience that according to the best of our knowledge and to the utmost of our power we have faithfully tried to maintain God’s Truth against the commandments and traditions of men.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2101 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Col 2.13

LIFE AND PARDON  
NO. 2101

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”** *Col 2:13***.**

THE teaching of this verse is much the same as that in preceding verses—but the Apostle does not hesitate to dwell again and again upon the important matters of quickening and forgiveness. These lie in the foundation. Ministers of Christ cannot too often go over the essential points—their hearers cannot too often hear vital Truths of God. Our frail memories and dull understandings require line upon line, precept upon precept, in reference to fundamental Truths—our apprehension of them is far too feeble, and can never be too vivid.

To find instances of the work of God in quickening souls and in pardoning sins, Paul does not look far afield. In the text he says, “And you,” and, according to the Revised Version, he repeats the word further on, and the passage runs thus, “You, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did He quicken together with Him.” He points personally to the saints at Colossi. We are not about to consider a prophecy to be fulfilled in the millennium, neither are we speaking of matters which concern the unknown dwellers in the moon.

No. The theme belongs to you. To you, I say, if indeed you are the people of God. You are specimens of the Divine Work—you has He quickened, you has He pardoned. It is profitable for us to be engaged upon matters which concern us. I shall speak to you of those things which I have tasted and handled of the good Word of Life, and it is my firm belief that, to the most of you, these matters are familiar in your mouths as household words. If not, I grieve over you. Let none of us be content unless the works of the Holy Spirit are manifest in us. What good is it to me if another man receive life and pardon, if I am cast to death and lie under condemnation?

Press forward, my Beloved, to a personal enjoyment of these chief blessings of the Covenant of Grace—life in Jesus, forgiveness through His blood. Let every part of the sermon have a finger pointed at yourselves. Hear it speak to you, even to you.

In the text we have the conjunction of two things—quickening and forgiveness. We will consider these things in connection with each other. Their order it may be difficult to lay down—in the text they are described as if they were the same thing. Which comes first, the impartation of the new life, or the blotting out of sin? Is not pardon first? Does God pardon a dead man? How can He give life, which is the proof of pardon, to the man who is not forgiven? On the other hand, if a man has not spiritual life sufficient to make him feel his guilt, how can he cry for pardon? And if it is

unsought, how shall it be received?

A man may be spiritually alive so as to be groaning under the pollution and the burden of sin, and yet he may not have received, by faith, the remission of sins. In the order of our experience, the reception of life comes before the enjoyment of pardon. We are made to live spiritually and so we are made to repent, to confess, to believe, and to receive forgiveness. First, the life which sighs under sin, and then the life which sings concerning pardon. Misery is first felt—and then mercy is received.

Following the line of experience, we shall notice, concerning the favored ones of God, first, what they were—“You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” Secondly, we shall note what has been done in them—“Has He quickened together with Him.” And then, thirdly, what He has done for them—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” May the Holy Spirit lead us into these Truths of God and give us the life of God, and the rest of faith!

I. First, then, consider WHAT THEY WERE. Beloved, they were all by nature children of wrath, even as others. There is no distinction in the condition of natural men before the Law. We all fell in Adam. We are all gone out of the way and have all become unprofitable. Any difference which now exists has been made by Divine Grace. But by nature we are all in the same condemnation and all tainted by the same depravity.

Where were we when the Lord first looked on us? Answer—We were dead according to the sentence of the Law. The Lord had said, “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” And Adam did die the moment that he ate of the forbidden fruit—and his posterity died in him. What is natural death? It is the separation of the body from the soul, which is its life. What is spiritual death? It is the separation of the soul from God, who is its life. It had been the very life of Adam to be united to God. And when he lost his union of heart with God, his spirit underwent a dreadful death.

This death is upon each one of us by nature. Above this comes in the dreadful fact, that, “He that believes not is condemned already.” The position of every Unbeliever is that of one who is dead by Law. As far as the liberties and privileges and enjoyments of heavenly things are concerned, he is written among the dead. His name is registered among the condemned. Yet, Beloved, while we are under the sentence of death, the Lord comes to us in almighty Grace and quickens us into newness of life, forgiving us all trespasses!

Are you trembling because of your condemned condition under the Law? Do you recognize the tremendous Truth of God that death is the sure and righteous result of sin? Then to you, even to you, the life-giving, pardoning Word is sent in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Oh that you may believe and so escape from condemnation!

These favored people were dead through the action of their sin. Sin stupefies and kills. Where it reigns, the man is utterly insensible to spiritual truth, feeling, and action. He is dead to everything that is holy in the sight of God. He may have keen moral perceptions, but he has no spiritual feelings. Men differ widely as to their moral qualities. All men are not alike bad, especially when measured in reference to their fellow men. Some may even be excellent and praiseworthy, viewed from that standpoint. But to spiritual things all men are alike dead.

Look at the multitude of our hearers—to what purpose do we preach to them? You may declare the wrath of God against the godless but what do they care? You may speak of Jesus’ love to the lost—how little it affects them! Sin is not horrible, and salvation is not precious to them. They may not controvert your teaching. But they have no sensible apprehension of the Truth of God—it does not come home to them as a matter of any consequence. Let eternal things drift as they may, they are perfectly content so long as they can answer those three questions—“What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?”

No higher question troubles their earth-bound minds. They may entertain some liking towards theological study and Bible teaching, as a matter of education. But they do not view the Truths of God revealed in Scripture as matters of overwhelming importance. They trifle. They delay. They set on one side the things which make for their peace. Their religion has no influence upon their thoughts and actions—they are dead. Sin has slain them. I see them mingled with this great congregation like corpses sitting upright among the living. I look out upon the masses of this vast city and upon the innumerable hosts of populous countries and I see a measureless cemetery, a dread domain of death. A region without life.

One point must be noticed here, which makes this spiritual death the more terrible—they are dead but yet responsible. If men were literally dead, then they were incapable of sin. But the kind of death of which we speak involves a responsibility none the less, but all the greater. If I say of a man that he is such a liar that he cannot speak the truth, do you therefore think him blameless? No. But you judge him to be all the more worthy of condemnation because he has lost the very sense which discerns between a truth and a lie.

If we say of a certain man, as we have had to do, “He is a rogue ingrained. He is so tricky that he cannot deal honestly but must always be cheating”—do you, therefore, excuse his fraud and pity him? Far from it. His inability is not physical, but moral inability, and is the consequence of his own persistence in evil. The Law is as much binding upon the morally incapable as upon the most sanctified in nature. If, through a man’s own perversity, he wills to reject good and love evil, the blame is with himself. He is said to be dead in sin—not in the sense that he is irresponsible—but in the sense that he is so evil that he will not keep the Law of God.

If a man were brought tomorrow before the Lord Mayor and he were accused of theft, suppose he should say, “My Lord, I ought to be set free, for I am such a rascal that I cannot see an article in a shop but what my fingers itch to lay hold upon it!” Would not the judge give such a worthless person all the more punishment? O Sinners, dead in sin, you are not so dead as thereby to be free from the guilt of breaking God’s Commandments and rejecting Christ. Rather you heap upon yourselves mountains of guilt every day that you abide in this condition.

The ungodly are so dead as to be careless as to their state. Indeed, all gracious things are despised of them. Sometimes they attend religious services. But they get angry if the preacher presses them too hard. I have known them vow that they will never hear the man again because he is so personal. Pray, Sirs, what is a preacher to be, but personal? If he shoots, is he to have no target and take no aim? What is our very office and business but to deal personally with you about your sins?

In ungodly men there is an utter recklessness as to their condition before God. They know that they may die. They know that if they die they will be lost. But they try to forget these facts. The ostrich is said to bury its head in the sand so as not to see the hunter, and then to fancy that it is safe. Thus do men fancy that, by forgetting the danger, they escape it. Some of you have lived in carelessness until gray hairs are on your head. Will you still risk your souls? Alas, you look more anxiously after a battered sixpence, which you miss from your pocket, than after your immortal soul! If you miss a ring from your finger while sitting here, you are more concerned about it than about your eternal destiny.

How foolish! How dead are you to all just judgment and prudence! It is your soul, your own soul, your only soul, your never-dying soul, to which we beg you to pay attention—and yet you can hardly have patience with us. If a prisoner in the condemned cell had no sort of care whether he should be set free or hanged, but could even joke about the scaffold and the executioner, you would feel that only by an extreme act of mercy could such a person be pardoned. No, if he cares nothing for the penalty, let him bear it—so man would say—and there would be justice in it. Yet God spoke not so in reference to some of us. For while we were in a condition of callousness the Grace of God came to us and by quickening us, gave us to be anxious and led us to pray.

The text adds that we were dead in the uncircumcision of our flesh. I need not dwell upon the external figure here employed. Its meaning is clear enough. The uncircumcision of our flesh means that we were not in covenant with God—it shows, also, the abiding of our filthiness upon us— the willingness of our souls to be aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without God in the world. This is where we were in the uncircumcision of our flesh. And yet the Grace of God found us out. Oh, I could paint the man! He is anxious about this world, but what does he care for the world to come? He is a master of his own trade and he prospers in it.

But for his God and His service, he spares not an hour’s consideration. He cries, “The Covenant of Grace, what is that?” And he turns on his heel, like Pilate, when he had said, “What is truth?” As to having any sense of the constant Presence of God, and his deep indebtedness to God, and of the sweetness of being pardoned, and the bliss of enjoying the love of God, and walking with God—he has no notion, or, at best, he cries, “Oh, yes, that is all very fine for those who have nothing else to do. Let them find delight in it if they can!”

To him God is nothing. Heaven is nothing. Hell less than nothing. He passes by Calvary, itself, where God in human flesh is bleeding out redemption and it is nothing to him. The wail from the Cross he never hears, though it asks him this question—“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto My sorrow!” What cares he for the wounds of his soul’s best Lover? He has no concern about any purchase made by the Redeemer, or of any death especially on his behalf, or any resurrection with Christ which he may hope to enjoy. The man is dead to faith and glory and immortality. The low and the groveling charm him, but the pure and the noble find him dead to their claims.

Yet to such, even to such, does Sovereign Grace approach. Unbought, unsought—it comes according to that word of Scripture, “I am found of them that sought Me not.”

Again, spiritually, the ungodly are dead and utterly incapable of obtaining life for themselves. Could any of you, with the utmost diligence, create life, even the lowest form of it? To a man who is dead, could you impart life? You might galvanize his limbs into a kind of motion. But real life, the pulsing of the heart, the heaving of the lungs—could you create it? You know you cannot! Much less can the dead man himself create life within himself. The man without Christ is utterly unable to quicken himself. We are “without strength,” unable to do anything as of ourselves and while we are in this condition, Divine Grace comes to us.

Alas, there remains one more point! Man may be described as dead and becoming corrupt. After a while the dead body shows symptoms of decay—this is vice in its beginning. Leave the corpse where it is, and it will become putrid, polluting the air and disgusting every sense of the living. “Bury my dead out of my sight,” is the cry of the most affectionate mother or wife. And so it is with many ungodly men. Some of them are restrained from the grosser vices, just as Egyptian bodies were, by spices, preserved from rottenness. By example, by instruction, by fear, by surroundings— many are kept from the more putrid sins, and therefore are not so obnoxious to society.

Towards God they are dead as ever. But towards man they are no more objectionable than the mummies in yonder cases in the British Museum. But this embalming of the dead with spices of morality has not been carried out with hosts of those around us. They rot above ground—their blasphemies pollute the air, their lewdness infects our streets, their revelry makes nights hideous. The tendency of dead flesh is towards the corruption which shows itself in loathsome actions. The mercy is, that where even this has taken place, where the foul worm of vice has begun its awful work in drunkenness, in blasphemy, in dishonesty, or in uncleanness of life—even there the quickening Spirit can come!

As life came to Lazarus, who had been dead four days, so can spiritual life come to those who have fallen into the noisomeness of open transgression. Leaving this painful matter, let us be filled with deep humility. For such were we in days not long since—but let us also be filled with hope for others. For He who quickened us can do the same for them.

II. And now, secondly, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN US? What has God worked?

We have been quickened. To tell you, exactly, how quickening is worked in us, is quite beyond my power. The Holy Spirit comes to a man when he is dead in sin and He breathes into him a new and mysterious life. We do not know how we receive our natural life—how the soul comes into the body we know not. Do you suppose that spiritual life in its beginning will be less mysterious? Did not our Lord say, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound thereof but can not tell from where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit”? You know not the way of the Spirit, nor how He breathes eternal life.

We know, however, that as soon as life comes, our first feeling is one of pain and uneasiness. In the case of persons who have been nearly drowned, when they begin to revive they experience very unpleasant sensations. Certainly the parallel holds good in spiritual things. Now, the man sees sin to be an exceedingly great evil. He is startled by the discovery of its foulness. He was told all about it and yet he knew nothing to purpose. But now sin becomes a load, a pain, a horror. As dead, he felt no weight. But as quickened, he groans beneath a load. Now he begins to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?”

Now the angels see him on his knees in private. Behold, he prays! “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” is his hourly sigh. Now, also, he begins to struggle against his evil habits—he addicts himself to Bible reading, to praying, and to hearing the Word of God. He is for awhile desperately earnest. Alas, he goes back to his old sins! Yet he cannot rest—again he seeks the Lord. With some men a large part of their early spiritual life has been taken up with agonizing strivings and painful endeavors to free themselves from the chains of sin. They have had to learn their weaknesses by their failures. But the Grace of God has not failed. Some, even for years after their conviction by the Spirit of God, have had no comfortable sense of pardon but very much conflict with sin—still, the life of God has never been utterly quenched within them.

Their struggles have proved that the heavenly germ was alive and was painfully resisting the forces of evil. Men themselves act as if they tried to put out the light which Divine Grace has kindled. But they cannot effect their purpose. When once they have been disturbed in their nest, the Lord has not allowed them to settle down in it again. Their once sweet sin has become bitter as wormwood to them. We have known men under conviction go further into sin to drown their convictions—just as a whale, when harpooned, will dive into the depths. But they come up again and again are wounded—they cannot escape.

In the biography of a man of God, who in his early days was a terrible drunkard, we find that, in struggling against intoxication, he was frequently beaten. And there appears in his diary a long blank of which he says, “Four years and a half elapsed and no account rendered! What can have been the cause of this chasm? Sin! Yes, sin of the blackest dye, of the deepest ingratitude to the Father of mercies!” The wanderer was restless and unhappy in sin. The life within was, like Jonah, thrown into the depths of the sea. But it hated its condition and struggled to rise out of it. God will not leave the life He has given, even under the worst conditions. But quickening leads to far more than this. By-and-by the new life exercises its holy senses and is more clearly seen to be life. The man begins to see that his only hope is in Christ and he tries humbly to hide himself beneath the merit of the Lord Jesus. He does not dare to say, “I am saved,” but he deeply feels that if ever he is saved, it must be through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Now, also, he begins to pray, pleading the precious blood. Now he hopes and his hope looks only through the windows of his Lord’s wounds. He looks for mercy only through the atoning sacrifice.

By-and-by he comes to trust that this mercy has really come to him and that Jesus had him on His heart when He suffered on the tree. By a desperate effort he throws himself on Christ and determines to lie at His feet and, if he must perish, to perish looking unto Jesus. This is a glorious resolve. See him after a while, as he rises up into peace and joy and consecration! His life now being joined to that of his Lord, he rejoices that he is never to be separated from Him. I think I hear him say, “I see it all now. The Lord Jesus bore my sin and carried it away. I died because He died. I live because He lives. The Lord accepts me, because He accepts His Son and thus I am ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ ”

From now on the quickened man tries to live for Christ, out of gratitude. This is the nature of the life he has received. He strives to grow up into Christ, and to become like his Lord in all things. From now on he and his Lord are linked together in an everlasting union and the cause of Jesus is the one thing for which he lives and for which he would be content to die. Blessed be God, I am not talking any new things to you—you know what I mean! For these forty years have I felt these things and many of you have felt them longer, still. At first the struggling light within you revealed to you nothing but your darkness—but now you see Jesus and see yourselves alive in Him with a life eternal and heavenly. Blessed be the Lord who has raised Jesus from the dead and has quickened us in Him and with Him!

III. Now we come to the third point, upon which I pray for a renewed unction from the Holy One. Let us consider, in the last place, WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FOR US—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Believing in Christ Jesus, I am absolved. I am clear, I am clear before the Lord. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is the most joyful theme that I can bring before you. And I want you to notice, first, that pardon is a Divine act. “Having forgiven all trespasses.” Who does that? Why, He that quickened you! is exclusively the Lord’s own—and the same God who gives us spiritual life also grants us pardon from His Throne.

He sovereignly dispenses pardons. We need not go to any human priest to seek absolution, for we may go at once to God, who alone has sovereign right to execute the death sentence or to pardon the offender. He alone can grant it with sure effect. If any man should say, “absolvo te,” (I absolve you), I would take it for what it was worth and its worth would not be much. But if HE says it, who is the Law-giver and the supreme King. If HE says it, against whom I have offended, then am I happy, indeed. Glory be to His name, who is a God ready to pardon! What bliss I have received

in receiving forgiveness from God!

Oh, my Hearer, if you have done wrong to your fellow man, ask his forgiveness, as you are bound to do. And if you get it, be thankful and feel as if a weight were removed from your conscience. But, after all, what is this, compared with being forgiven all trespasses by God, Himself? This can calm the ruffled sea of the soul—yes, still its fiercest tempest. This can make you sleep at nights, instead of tossing to and fro upon a pillow, which conscience turns to stone beneath your aching head. This gives the gleaming eye, the beaming face, the bounding heart. This brings Heaven down to earth and lifts us near to Heaven. The Lord has blotted out our sins, and thus He has removed the most bitter fountain of our sorrows. Pardon from God is a charter of liberty, a testament of felicity. God’s pardon is a gift most free.

Look at the text and note that this pardon comes to persons who are dead in sin. They were utterly unworthy, and did not even seek mercy. The Lord who comes to men when they are dead in sin, comes to quicken them and to pardon them. Not because they are ready but because HE is ready. Hearken, O Man! If in your bosom there is at this moment a great stone instead of a heart of flesh—if you are paralyzed as to all good things. If there is only enough life in you to make you feel your terrible incapacity for holiness and fellowship with God, yet God can pardon you—even as you are and where you are. We were in that condition, my Brethren, when the Lord came to us in love. “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

We saw that Jesus died, we believed in Him as able to save, by His Grace, and we received the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is free. The Lord looks for no good thing in the sinner. But He gives him every good thing. O my Hearer, if the Lord looked for good in you, He could not find it. He looks for nothing you can do, or nothing you can feel, or nothing you can resolve to do or feel. But He shows mercy because He delights in mercy. He passes by iniquity, transgression and sin, because it is His nature to be gracious. The cause of Divine pardon is in God, Himself, and in His dear Son. It is not in you, O Sinner!

Being dead in the uncircumcision of your flesh, what can you do? He quickens you and He pardons you. Yes, He is All in All to you. Wonders of Divine Grace! When I get upon this subject I do not need to give you illustrations, nor to use choice phrases. The glorious fact stands forth in its own native beauty—infinite pardon from an infinite God—given because of His own mercifulness and the merit of His beloved Son—and not because of anything whatsoever in the man whom He pardons. “But the man repents,” says one. Yes, I know. But God gives him repentance. “But he confesses sin.” Yes, I know it. For the Lord leads him to acknowledge his trespasses. All and everything which looks like a condition of pardon, is also given by the Free and Sovereign Grace of God—and given freely— without money and without price.

I want you to notice how universal is this pardon in reference to all sin—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” Consult your memory and think of all your trespasses, if you dare. That one black night! Has it left a crimson spot, indelible, never to be concealed? In many instances one special sin breeds more distress than a thousand others. That crime has left a deeper scar than any other. In vain you cry, “Out, hideous spot!” Should you wash that hand, it would stain ten thousand Atlantics, and it would remain a scarlet spot, never to be erased forever. No process known to men can wash out the stain.

But God’s infinite mercy can put away that hideous, unmentionable crime, and it shall be as though it had never been. Possibly, however, you do not so much remember any one transgression as the whole heap of them. Certainly, a multiplicity of minor sins heaped together, tower upward like a great Alp, although no one offense may seem so notable as to demand mention. We have sinned every day and every hour and almost every moment of every hour—how numberless our transgressions! Our sins of omission are beyond all computation. But all these, too many for you to remember, too many for me to number, are forgiven to the man in Christ—“Having forgiven you all trespasses”—ALL, not one excepted. You have sins not yet known nor confessed—but they are forgiven. For the blood cleans from all sin.

I should like to help your memory by reminding you of your sins before conversion. Blessed is he whose sin is covered. One does not wish to uncover it. “Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.” The child of God, who has long been rejoicing in faith, has need still to pray that. For our sins may vex our bones long after they have been removed from our consciences—the consequences of a sin may fret us after the sin, itself, is forgiven.

Then think of your sins after conviction. You were struck down on a certain day with a great sense of sin and you hurried home and cried upon your knees, “O God, forgive me!” Then you vowed you would never do the like again. But you did. The dog returned to his vomit. You began to attend a place of worship. You were very diligent in religious duties. But all of a sudden you went back to your old companions and your old ways. If your sin was drink, you thought you had mastered it and could be very moderate. But a fierce thirst came upon you, which you could not resist— and you were soon as drunken as ever. Remember this with shame.

Or it may have been a more deliberate backsliding. And deliberation greatly adds to the sin of sins. Without being particularly tempted, you began to hanker after your old pleasures and almost to despise yourself for having denied yourself their indulgence. I know a man who was present at a Prayer Meeting and was so worked upon that he prayed. But afterwards he said that he would never go into such a place again, for fear he should again be overcome. Think of being afraid to be led aright— ashamed to go to Heaven!

Ah, Friends, we have been bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, dogs that have slipped their collars, horses that have kicked over the traces. Sins after conviction, as doing despite to Divine Love, are very grievous trespasses. Like the moth, you had your wings singed in the candle and yet you flew back to the flame—if you had perished in it, who could have pitied you? Yet, after such folly, the Lord had mercy on you—“Having forgiven you ALL trespasses.”

A still worse set of sins must be remembered—sins after conversion— sins after you have found peace with God, after you have enjoyed high fellowship with Jesus. O Brothers and Sisters, these are cruel wounds for our Lord! These are evils which should melt us to tears, even to hear of them. What? Pardoned, and then sin again! Beloved of the Lord, and still rebelling! You sang so sweetly—

*“Your will be done; Your will be done”*  
and then went home and murmured! You talked to others about evil temper, and yet grew angry. You are old and experienced, and yet no boy could have been more imprudent! O God, we bless You for the morning and evening lamb. For Your people need the sacrifice perpetually! We need a morning sacrifice, lest the night has gathered anything of evil. And we require an evening sacrifice for the sins of the day.

Dwell for awhile upon the large blessing of the text. Whatever your sins may have been, if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has quickened you together with Him and has forgiven you all trespasses. He pardons most effectually. Ask God about your sins and He says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more!” If God Himself does not remember them, they are most effectually removed. Ask Holy Scripture where they are and Hezekiah tells you, “You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” Where is that? God sees everything, and everywhere, and therefore everywhere is before His face. If, therefore, He casts our sins behind His back, He throws our sins into “the nowhere”—they cease to exist.

“In those days, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” Surely this is enough to set all the bells of your heart ringing! Remember, also, dear Friends, that this pardon is most perfect. He does not commute the punishment but He pardons the crime. He does not pardon, and then confine for life, nor pardon today and punish tomorrow—this were not worthy of a God. The pardon is given and never revoked—the deed of Divine Grace is done and it can never be undone. God will not remember the sin which He has blotted out, nor condemn the offender whom He has absolved.

O Believer, the Lord so fully absolves you, that all your sins, which might have shut you out of Heaven, shall not hinder your way there! All that sin of yours, which might have filled you with despair, shall not even fill you with dismay. The Lord shall wipe the tears from your eyes, as He has washed the sins from your person. Even the very stain of sin shall be removed. Remember what He says of scarlet and crimson sins. Does He say, “I will wash them so that nothing shall remain beyond a pale red”? Does He say, “I will wash them till nothing shall remain but a slight rosy tint”? No! He says, “They shall be as wool: I will make them white as snow.” The Almighty Lord will do His work of remission in an absolutely perfect style, and not a shadow of a spot shall remain.

Here is a point that I must dwell upon for a moment, namely, that this pardon shall be seen to be perfectly consistent with Justice. If I were pardoned and felt that God had weakened the foundations of His moral government by winking at evil, I should feel insecure in my pardoned state— and should have no rest. If the Justice of God were in the least infringed by my forgiveness, I should feel like a felon towards the universe and a robber of God. But I bless God that He pardons sin in strict connection with Justice.

Behold the costly system by which this was effected. He Himself came here in the Person of His dear Son. He Himself became man, and dwelt among us. He Himself took the load of His people’s sin. He bore the sin of many and was made a curse for us. He put away both sin and the curse by His wondrous sacrifice. The marvel of Heaven and earth, of time and eternity, is the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This is the mystery that brings more glory to God than all creation and all Providence. How could it be that He should be slain for sinners, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God?

To finish transgression and make an end of sin was a labor worthy of His Godhead—and Christ has perfectly achieved it by His sufferings and death. You had no fiction before you when, just now, you sang concerning Him—

*“Jesus was punished in my place,  
Without the gate my Surety bled  
To expiate my stain—  
On earth the Godhead deigned to dwell,  
And made of infinite avail  
The sufferings of the man.”*

Now are we justly forgiven. And the Throne of God is established. By His death as our Substitute, our Lord Jesus has set forth the righteous severity of God as well as His boundless mercy.

To us Justice and Mercy seemed opposed, but in Jesus we see them blended. We bless the Lord for His atoning sacrifice. We feel an infinite satisfaction in the fact that none can dispute the validity of a pardon which comes to us signed by the hand of the eternal King—and countersigned by the pierced hand of Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree—and gave for those sins a complete vindication of the Law which we had broken.

Note well the last consideration upon this point of the forgiveness of all trespasses. It ought to make you feel unutterably happy. From now on your pardon is bound up with the glory of Christ. If your pardon does not save you, then Christ is no Savior. If, resting in Him, your sins are not forgiven, then He undertook a fruitless errand when He came to save His people from their sins. Every drop of Christ’s blood demands the eternal salvation of every soul that is washed in it. The Godhead and Manhood of Christ and all the glory of His Mediatorship, stand up and claim for every Believer that he shall be delivered from sin. What? Did He bear sin and shall we bear it, too?

No—if the Lord has found in Him a ransom, His redeemed are free. Since to save me, who was once dead in sin, and in the uncircumcision of my flesh—and now has become the glory of Christ, I am sure I shall be saved, for He will not tarnish His own name. O Believer, to bring you home without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, has become the ambition of your Savior and He will not fail, or be discouraged. He will neither lose His lifework, nor His death throes. God forbid! And yet this must be, unless you, who are quickened together with Him, shall be found at the last without fault before the Throne of God.

Now, let us just think of this—we are forgiven. I do not mean all of you. For if you are out of Christ, you have no part in this grand absolution. May the Lord have mercy upon you, quicken you today and bring you to Christ! But as many as are trusting in Christ and so are living in union with Him, you are forgiven. A person who has been condemned by the Law and then has received a free pardon, walks out of the prison and goes where he pleases. There is a policeman. Does he fear him? No, he has a free pardon, and the policeman cannot touch him. But there are a great many persons who know him and know him to be guilty. That does not matter. He has a free pardon and nobody can touch him. He cannot be tried again, however guilty he may have been. The free pardon has wiped the past right out.

Now, today, Child of God, you begin anew—you are clean—for He has washed you and has done the work right well. We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore shall we be before the Throne of God and praise Him. What could we do less than praise Him day and night? When shall we ever stop? When we are in His temple, free from all danger of future sin and trial, we will forever praise Him who has forgiven us all trespasses. I charge you, let us meet in Heaven, all of us.

Some have dropped in here this morning from all parts of the country and from America. And we may never meet again on earth. Let us meet around the Throne in Heaven and sing, “unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” God grant that we may. Who wants to be left out? Is there one person here who would like to be shut out in that day? I pray you, enter in at once—

*“Come guilty souls and flee away  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds;  
This is the welcome Gospel-day,  
Wherein Free Grace abounds.”*

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DEATH AND ITS SENTENCE ABOLISHED  
NO. 2605

**A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 15, 1899. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1883.

**“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.”***Col 2:13-14***.**

IT tends to excite gratitude in our hearts if we remember what the Lord has done for us. It is not wrong for us to think of all that we still need from God, but it would be exceedingly ungrateful if we were to forget what we have already received. By far the greater part of salvation is already ours and though, in some respects, we have not yet attained, neither are already perfect, yet in other respects we are complete in Christ Jesus. If we are truly believers in Christ, we are already saved—we are not merely in a salvable state, but we have really obtained salvation. In Christ we are delivered from the curse of the Law of God and we have an eternal inheritance already secured to us. I must not dwell on that blessed theme. I only mention it, in passing, to remind you that it encourages our gratitude if we remember what the Lord has done for us.

It also stimulates us to hope for more blessings in the future. It puts a keener edge upon our prayers and helps us to plead with greater confidence, for we feel that, inasmuch as God has already given us so much and done so much for us, He will perfect that which concerns us, and will not forget the work of His own hands. The remembrance of what the Lord has done for us is also quite sure to inflame our love. We cannot be cold-hearted if we continue to remember God’s goodness to us. We must be glad in the Lord and, with that gladness, there must come fervent love to Him who has worked all these things on our behalf and brought us into the blessed estate of those who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

This morning, [Sermon #1744, Volume 39—Where the “If” Lies”——read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org] I talked to those who were seeking the Savior. They had their turn, then, so now I am going to speak to those who have found the Lord. Ah, dear Friends, how precious He is to you! I want you to see what He has done for you—what God the everlasting Father has done for you through Jesus Christ His Son—that you may come and sit at His feet in adoring love and feel your hearts burn within you as you meditate upon the riches of His amazing Grace. Our text speaks of two things which God has done for us through Christ Jesus. First, there is the removal of the death within us: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses.” The second thing is the removal of the handwriting which was against us. This we have in the 14th verse. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.”

Before I come to the subject of my discourse, I want every child of God whom I am addressing to feel, “The preacher’s talk is to be about me and about what Christ has done for me,” for, remember, dear Friends, that the work of Christ is as distinctly on behalf of each Believer as if he were the only object of Divine Love in the whole universe! And while it is true that Christ’s work concerns all His people—and it is a very great comfort that it is so—yet it is also true that it concerns each one of His people and it is all the property of each one. I want you, just now, to eat your own morsel, to claim your own portion and to take home to your own heart what God has given to you by a Covenant of salt, and so given it to you that it can never be taken from you!

I. First, then, the Lord has done this for all of us who believe in Him— HE HAS REMOVED OUR INWARD SPIRITUAL DEATH.  
Turn to the text to see what this death was. “You being dead in your sins.” We were all, then—the regenerate as well as the rest of mankind— “dead in trespasses and sins.” What kind of death was this? Certainly it was not physical death. We lived, moved and had our being. We exercised our wills and did as we pleased in our enmity and opposition to God. The Lord does not treat men as if they were sticks and stones, nor does He ever regard them as such. They are alive, and when they sin, they sin most sadly of their own accord.  
Neither was our death a mental death, for the ungodly can think as well as others, and they have all the powers of reason unless, indeed, they have dulled and destroyed them by certain forms of sin which produce that result. Alas, there are some of the most acute minds in the world that are not reconciled to God. The men are alive enough as to their minds, yet they are truly said to be dead! I could almost wish, for some people, that it was a mental death rather than the kind of death they have, since now the quickness of their intellect only helps them to increase their guilt and to multiply the reasons for their condemnation.  
And yet again, as it is not a physical death, nor a mental death, so neither is it a moral death. Man is not so dead that he sins without guilt, or lives without responsibility. No man who remains out of Christ is without guilt on that account. He who continues an unbeliever may not say that he cannot help it—it is his fault and his sin that he does not believe. Indeed, our Lord told His disciples that the Comforter would convince the world of sin for this very reason—“Because,” He said, “they believe not on Me.” To Nicodemus, our Lord also said, “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” O dear Hearers, if I could believe that you were mere machines, or that you had drifted along the stream of time like some stray timber on a Canadian river. If I believed that you could not in any way help yourselves, but were the mere creatures of your circumstances, then I might be comfortable concerning you, for you would be exempt from criminality. But it is not so—you are men and women living before the living God and you are responsible to Him for your actions and your words—and even for the thoughts and imaginations of your heart! For every rejection of His Gospel you will have to give account at the Last Great Day. And if you remain out of Christ, that account will seal your doom forever.  
The kind of death here spoken of is spiritual death—death as to higher things than can be grasped by the hands, or seen with the eyes, or comprehended by the natural mind. Only the spiritual man knows what spiritual things are, for they have to be spiritually discerned. You would not think of teaching a horse the wonders of astronomy because there is no mind in the horse that could learn that science! Neither can we, of ourselves, teach spiritual things to our fellow men, because, until they are born again, born from above, they do not possess the faculty with which they can grasp spiritual things. Our Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”—and therefore can only lay hold of the things that are fleshly. “And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”—and until a man is born of the Spirit, he is without the faculty of understanding and enjoying spiritual things.  
As far as spiritual things are concerned, man’s understanding is dead. He can comprehend the highest and most wonderful of sciences, but he cannot—or, what is tantamount to it, he will not—understand the things of God. He turns on his heels and says, “I cannot make out what you mean.” No, we know that you cannot, and we are not surprised at your lack of apprehension, for it is just what the Bible leads us to expect. We even find those who consider themselves to be learned divines rejecting the Gospel and saying that it is not consistent with their philosophy. We never thought that it was—and we never imagined that they could receive the Gospel until they are converted and become as little children. The great reason why men reject the Gospel is because they are not born again. Because they have not received the life of God into their souls. If they had, they would understand it so as to delight in it. But the understanding, spiritually, is under a cloud of night which the Word of God calls “death.”  
So also is the human will dead to spiritual things. When a person is literally dead, he cannot will to come to life. Neither does any man ever will to come to Christ till the Spirit of God gives him that will, for his natural will is exerted in quite another direction, as our Lord said to the Jews, “You will not come to Me that you might have life.” The will is a slave, it is held in chains, it is set on mischief and resolved not to subject itself to the will of the Most High. Not morally, nor mentally, but spiritually, the will of man is dead!  
So, too, is it true of the affections that they are dead to spiritual things. Men, in their unregenerate state, will not love that which is good. Alas, they will not love Christ. He is altogether lovely, yet unrenewed men see nothing in Him that they should love. Holiness, purity, the will of God—all these things are worthy of being loved, yet men do not love them. No, they love the very opposite until the Grace of God comes and quickens them.  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, is not all this a true description of what we were before the Spirit of God begin to deal with us in His regenerating power? Were we not dead to all spiritual things? Some of you used to come to the House of God, but you were here just as so many corpses might have been. You used to visit where there were Christian people, but you could not understand what they said about their experience. You had no enjoyment in their joys, neither did you sorrow in their sorrows. There was a deep gulf between you and them—and the secret was that you were natural men and they were spiritual men! You loved not the things which they loved, even as they took no delight in the things which charmed you, for you were in a condition of spiritual death.  
Consider, next, dear Friends, what that spiritual death involved. The text puts it thus—“You being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.”  
First, we were dead in sin. No, I quoted the text wrongly, for we were dead in our sins—the word is in the plural. They were our own sins, not the sins of our fate or destiny, or of our circumstances and surroundings, but our own sins. We willingly committed them. As the result of our death to everything that was holy, good and spiritual, we sinned and we took pleasure in sin. We repeated our old sins and we devised and invented new sins! They were, with an emphasis, our sins, our own actual, real, personal sins!  
These sins were very varied according to our condition and temperament. Some went after one sin, others after another. Some were quiet and gentle sinners, so that many persons thought that they were holy. Others were noisy outrageous sinners who were a nuisance to the parish in which they lived. Some were sinners under some sort of fear, but they would have sinned more if they had dared to do so. Others had cast off all fear, both of God and man, and plunged headlong into rioting, wantonness and all manner of unmentionable crimes. All these sins were accompaniments of spiritual death—they were just what winding-sheets are to dead men. There, then, is the picture of what we were and of what the unregenerate are—“dead in trespasses and sins”—lying there wrapped in the cerements of sin. We were surrounded, covered with sin, getting ready in that condition to soon be carried out to the eternal burial, to the place “where their worm dies not, and where the fire is not quenched.” That is how I was by nature! That is how you were, Brothers and Sisters, who are now alive unto God. You may, perhaps, have seen an Egyptian mummy, bound from head to foot with the wrappings appertaining to death—so it was with you. Your sins were about your head, your heart, your hands, your feet! Sins surrounded you everywhere—and there you lay, as the text says—“dead in your sins.”  
Now let us see how we were delivered. And as we lay our hands on our hearts and think of what God has done for us, let us prepare to bless and magnify His name. “You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened”—He has made you to live—“you has He quickened together with Him.” God, by His Grace, has made you to live in Christ. Do you not feel the difference between what you were and what you now are? Can you imagine what a change there would be if a dead man who had been lying in his grave clothes could suddenly sit upright, or rise out of the shell in which the undertaker had placed him? What a contrast between the state of death and the state of life! That is a very faint figure of the difference between what we now are and what we used to be. Do you not realize it, Brothers and Sisters? The things you once despised, you now value. And the things you then passed by with a sneer, you would now live for and die for! You used to hear about these things and it often seemed dull work to listen to a sermon. But now there is music in it from the first word to the last. That Bible of yours used to be like an old will to you, and old wills are very dry reading, but now you have found the record of a great legacy left to yourself and, oh, it is blessed work to read the will now—you could sit and study it all day long!  
Praying, also, used to be hard work. You managed to mutter, in a dead way, a few dead words, but prayer is now quite another thing with you— your whole spirit is alive when you draw near to God in supplication. In fact, you are a changed man altogether! I suppose that if you were to meet your old self, he would hardly know you, for you are so greatly altered. I daresay he would say to you, “Come, old fellow, let us go to the theater, or turn into this beer-shop, or let us go home and find some way of amusing ourselves.” You would reply, “No, Sir. I cut your acquaintance a long time ago and I do not mean to have anything to do with you, so you may go about your business as soon as you like. I am not what I was, for I have been crucified with Christ—and I am dead, and my life is hid with Christ in God.” There was one of the old saints who used to keep company with a woman in his ungodly days, and when he was converted, she met him in the street, and said to him, “Austin, you know me.” “Well,” he said, “yes, I do. But I am not Austin any longer. At least I am not the person that I used to be.” Oh, it is a blessed thing when we can feel that we are not what we once were! True, we are not yet what we want to be and we are not what we shall be, but we are not what we used to be—and we shall never again be what we used to be! The Grace of God will prevent that, now that we have been quickened.  
But how are we quickened? Paul says that God has quickened us together with Christ. And by this he means, first, that we have been quickened mystically by Christ’s Resurrection. That morning when Christ Jesus rose from the dead, all His people rose in Him! The sun was not yet up, but the Prince of Life and Glory had lingered long enough in the sepulcher, so, awaking into life through Divine power, He began to unwrap Himself from the cerements of the tomb. He laid the napkin by itself for your use and mine, that we may wipe

our eyes when our dear friends are taken away. But He took the grave clothes and put them together, that He might leave the house ready furnished against the time when we should be carried there—our last bed being thus supplied by Him with all the furniture we shall need when our time comes to sleep in it. Then He waited a while till the sheriff’s officer came down to set the hostage free, for the angel descended from Heaven, the stone was rolled away and Jesus breathed the sweet morning air again. He that had been dead arose and left the tomb, no more to die! And, in that hour, everyone who is in Him was virtually made to rise. The resurrection of all whom He represented was guaranteed by His Resurrection, as He said to His disciples, “Because I live, you shall live also.” That is the result of the mystical union between Christ and His people.  
But, as a matter of fact, and practically, you and I began to live, spiritually, when we became united to Christ by faith. Do you remember that glad hour when you first believed in Him, trusted Him, put your soul into His hands? Ah, then it was that you began to really live! Oh, what a difference that saving faith makes in us! In our Savior’s parable about the two builders, there is one expression that seems to me very significant. Luke’s account of it runs thus—“Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream bent vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that hears, and does not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”  
Did you notice, as I quoted the words, that in the second instance Christ left out all about coming to Him? Yet that coming to Him is the essential thing. If you come to Him and hear His Words, and do them, you will have a rock for the foundation of your eternal building, and it will stand any storm that may beat upon it. But if you do not come to Christ, even though you hear His Words, that hearing can be of no permanent profit to you. Indeed, it will really increase your condemnation! It is the coming to Him, the getting into union with Him which settles and decides the all-important point in connection with our new life. So, then, it was when we became one with Christ by an act of living faith that we were quickened, blessed be His holy name forever and ever! If we do, indeed, possess this new life, let us show it! Let us prove, by our conduct and conversation, that we are no longer numbered among the dead, that we have risen with Christ and cannot go back to the tomb! We will have nothing to do with whitewashing the outside of our old sepulcher. We have left the outside and the inside, too, and now we live unto God and have done forever with the old state of death. I have set forth all too feebly the great work of God in removing the death that was within us, but if you feel that my words are true concerning you, your heart will beat high with devout thanksgiving to the quickening Spirit who has worked this great miracle in you!  
II. Now I come, secondly, to notice the great deed of Christ in THE REMOVAL OF THE HANDWRITING THAT WAS AGAINST US.  
Consider, dear Friends, what this handwriting was. When a man has some charge or insinuation against him merely whispered about and floating in the air, he hardly knows what it is. And, perhaps, if he is a sensible man, he does not care much what it is, but he lets it fly about till it flies away. But when he has an accusation made against him in black and white—when there is a handwriting against him, a charge written down and laid before the court, an indictment upon which he is to be tried—that is a most serious matter. Handwriting, especially in legal matters, is generally more accurate than mere speech, and there is, against every ungodly man, something written with the finger of God which he cannot deny, for it is absolutely true. Handwriting also abides. The old Latin proverb says, “Litera scripta manet,” that which is written remains. Be very careful as to what you put into black and white because it may be brought against you many years after you have written it— when you may think very differently concerning it. There is, against every unconverted man, a handwriting which will remain and which will be brought up against him at the great Day of Judgment. It is not a mere baseless rumor floating about, but something tangible which will last and which cannot be removed except by the almighty power of God.  
What is meant, in our text, by “he handwriting of ordinances that was against us”? I cannot give all the meaning in a word, but, does it not mean, first, that the moral law, which we have broken, has written out a curse against us? Each of the Ten Commandments has, as it were, united with the rest to draw up an indictment against us. The First Commandment says, “He has broken me.” The Second cries, “He has broken me.” The Third, “He has broken me,” and the whole 10 together have laid the same charge against each one of us! That is the handwriting of the Law of God condemning every man of woman born while he remains in a state of nature. The Jews, you remember, came under another law—the Ceremonial Law. Did that Ceremonial Law draw up an indictment against them? Was it not intended to rid them of sin? I answer, No! There was a lamb slain every morning and that sacrifice must have reminded at least some of them that a perpetual atonement was provided, but, as with an undertone of thunder, it also reminded them all that such an atonement was still needed, that, after a thousand years of the offering of lambs, sacrifices were still required! There was ordained a Day of Atonement with specially solemn ceremonies, but what did that day say to the Jews? That an atonement was provided? No, but that an atonement was still needed, for, as soon as ever that year was up, the atonement had not been made and they must have another Day of Atonement!  
The Apostle Paul expressly says, “But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” There was a perpetual remembrance of sin in every one of the offerings under the Ceremonial Law. I need not stay to speak of them in detail, but they were intended— the most of them, at any rate—to continually remind men that sin was not washed away. Thus all the ceremonies drew up a handwriting and said to the Jews, and to us, too, “You need an atonement by blood. You are guilty and there is no hope of your ever coming to God except by a sacrifice which these rams and bullocks represent, but the place of which they cannot possibly fill.”  
Then there is another “handwriting of ordinances that was against us.” I think there is written across the very face of Nature the great Truth of God that man has sinned. Sin has so marred the world which God made perfect that none can go through it without feeling inconvenience and often sorrow and pain. There are some men who pass through the world as though it were a burning fiery furnace threatening their destruction. Why howls the blast upon the sea and dashes the galleon upon the rocks? Why have we earthquake, tornado, cyclone, and the like? Why, because man is a sinner! And there is a handwriting in the very ordinances of Nature written, as it were, mystically upon the wall, as it was at Belshazzar’s feast—and this is what it says, “You are weighed in the balances, and are found lacking.” There is also another handwriting to the same effect—for God’s works always sing the same tune—that is, the handwriting of conscience within the heart. Conscience writes, “You have sinned. You have done the things which you ought not to have done, and you have left undone the things which you ought to have done.” And if conscience is permitted to write in its own bold and, it sets down this terrible message, “You are lost, ruined and undone! The wrath of God has gone out against you.” This is “the handwriting of ordinances” which is in every part of God’s creation, though, alas, many are unable or unwilling to read it!  
Now let us ask, concerning this “handwriting of ordinances,” what is to become of it? It will certainly be impossible for us to answer it, for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” There may be some men here who know of little pieces of handwriting that have cost them a great deal of trouble. A so-called friend came to see you—it would have been a good thing for you if it had been your worst enemy, for you might have been more on your guard against him. Your friend wanted just a little help for a time—he could not meet a certain liability just then, so he asked you merely to put your name on the back of a piece of paper. You would never see that document again—he would be quite able to meet it in three months—there was really no risk in the matter. The plausible man said, “You have only to put your name there. You will never be called upon in the least degree. I have plenty of money and have only to call it in when I need any, so it will be all right.” You were persuaded by him and, like a fool, put your name at the back of his bill. You knew that you had not the money guaranteed by that paper, yet you promised to pay it! You did not believe that text in the Bible which tells you that, “He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hates suretyship is sure.”  
I do not know when that bill will come due. Perhaps it will be next week, but I know that you are feeling uncommonly uncomfortable about it as you sit there in your pew—and well you may! You say that you will never do such a thing again—it is not likely that you will have the opportunity to do so, but you will find that it is sufficient to have that one piece of handwriting against you—your own handwriting, too! It will be brought home to you sooner or later, you will see it again! Do not comfort yourself with the foolish idea that you will get off Scot free, for you will not. Such a case as that rarely or never occurs. You have given the bond and the man who holds it will, like Shylock, demand his pound of flesh! And the worst of it is that the bond is one of your own making and you voluntarily incurred the debt. I wish I could tell you how to get clear of it, but I am glad that I can tell you how to get free from a worse bond even than that—one into which you have entered through your sin—the bond of your own indebtedness to the infinite Justice of God for all your rebellions against His Law, all your breaches of His Divine Covenant! You have sinned against Him and it is all down in black and white in the handwriting that is against you.  
Now listen, dear Friends. The Lord Jesus Christ has done this for all of us who are believers in Him. First, He has taken that handwriting and He has blotted it out, as our text says, “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us.” The Greek original has the meaning of smearing over or expunging the handwriting so as to make it illegible as a document to be produced against us. With His own atoning blood, the Lord Jesus Christ has discharged all our debt! As believers in Him, there is nothing whatever due from us to the justice of Almighty God, for Christ has paid it all. We cannot, therefore, be punished for our sin, for that would be unjust, since God will not and cannot punish, first the Substitute, and then the sinners for whom that Substitute bled and died. God’s justice cannot demand the payment twice—  
*“First my bleeding Surety’s hand,  
And then again at mine.”*

Christ became the Surety of all who believe in Him and He was made to smart for it. But, by the carrying out of His suretyship, He discharged all your liabilities at the bar of God if you are a Believer and, therefore, He smeared over, expunged, erased, obliterated the handwriting of ordinances that was against you—and it can never again be laid to your charge. This was the Truth that inspired that brave challenge of the Apostle Paul, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Christ has done something more than this for us. Look at the text again—“blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way.” First it is blotted out. Then it is taken away, lest the blotting out should not prevent it from being read—for you can sometimes trace through an erasure what was written there, and you say, “Oh, yes, I see what the entry was—‘Soand-so, so many pounds in debt.’” Yes, but Christ says, “You need not worry yourselves about that handwriting, for I will take it away.” So He removes the document, itself, out of sight! It lay in the court against you, but Christ first obliterated it and then took the accusation itself—the indictment, the charge upon which you were to be tried—and put it out of the way!

Perhaps someone says, “But, possibly, after all, He may bring the accusation up again. He may only have hidden it for a while and laid it by that He may bring it out against me some other day. And when it is produced, some expert will examine it with his glass and through all the blotting he will make out the original charge and say, ‘This man was guilty of such-and-such crimes.’” “No,” says Christ, “He shall not do that, for I will let you see where I put the handwriting. I will take it quite out of the way, but I will fasten it up where you can see it”—“nailing it to His Cross.” Ah, that is glorious! Just as Christ was fastened to the tree by those dreadful Roman nails, so has He nailed up all the sins of His people! And all that could be laid to their charge! I have heard that they used to drive a nail through the Bank of England notes when they were cashed—a hole was made right through the center and they could never be used again. And our blessed Lord has driven the nails right through the accusation that was against His people—and there you can see the handwriting hanging up upon His Cross!

First He blotted it out. Then He took it out of the way and, finally, He nailed it up to His Cross and there it still is, its accusing and condemning power forever gone! Now, child of God, sit down and say to yourself, “As to all the sins I have ever committed, whatever they may have been, inasmuch as I believe in Jesus, the record is crossed out and, consequently, the very parchment upon which it was written (to use that figure) has been taken out of the way. And of that I may be quite sure that an end has been made of it, once and for all—my Lord has nailed it, as a crucified thing which He has put to death with Himself upon the tree of Sacrifice, and now it has no power to alarm or annoy me.”

What better way can there be of abolishing a debt than by paying it? And Christ has paid your debts and mine. What better way can there be of putting an end to sin than by bearing the punishment which was due to sin? The punishment which was due to sin was for us to lie forever under the wrath of God, but, owing to the majesty of Christ’s Divine Person, the suffering which He endured upon the Cross was accepted as an equivalent for all that suffering which we deserved to endure forever! All the wrath due to Christ’s people was condensed into that one cup of which He began to drink in Gethsemane. As He put His lips to it, and tasted it, so terrible was it that it covered Him with a bloody sweat! But He never ceased to drink until He turned the chalice upside down and not one black drop was found lingering there. At that one tremendous draught of love, the Lord had drunk damnation dry for all His people! And “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” How could there be any when Christ endured it all?

O Beloved Friends, go in thought to Calvary, and with joyful hearts trust in the Crucified! The great transaction is done, and done forever! He has blotted out the handwriting that was against you and put it away, “nailing it to His Cross.” All this is true of everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, trust yourself with Him, now, and my text shall be true of you at this moment and true forever! “You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.” God bless you all, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK—307, 430, 406. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*Col 2:6-23***;** *Col 3:1-3***.**

**Col 2:6**. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him. That is, keep on as you began. Christ was enough for you when, as poor, guilty sinners, you came and trusted Him, so keep on trusting Him in the same way as you did at the first. Do not try to live by feeling, after having lived by faith. Do not begin to live upon outward forms and ceremonies after having found salvation by Grace through faith. “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.”

7. Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Christians are to make progress in the heavenward road, but they are not to have any other foundation for their faith than they had at the beginning of their Christian career. We are still to stand fast as we stood at the first. We are to be rooted, grounded, “established in the faith,” keeping to the old Truth of God that saved our souls, and laying hold upon the same Savior with greater tenacity every hour of our lives. We are not to be like chaff driven before the wind—forever moving—but to be like the cedars of Lebanon, firmly rooted and withstanding the heaviest storms.

8. Beware lest any man spoil you. Or, “rob you.”  
8. Through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Cleave to Christ, Beloved! Go no further than He leads you and turn not away from Him either to the right hand or to the left. In Him are contained all the riches of Grace and all the treasures of knowledge. If you would become truly wise, seek to know more of the wisdom of God in Christ Jesus.  
9, 10. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power. You have everything in Christ that you ought to need. You are fully furnished, completely supplied and equipped for all future service. You need not go to Christ for the supply of some of your needs and then go elsewhere for the supply of other needs, but, “you are complete in Him.”  
11. In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Anything good that there was in Judaism, you have secured to you in Christ. Whatever there was of blessing and privilege in the Covenant mark in the flesh of those whom God made to be His people in the olden time, you have handed on to you by the death of Christ.  
12-15. Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His Cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The Lord Jesus Christ has done everything for His people—fought their battle, won their victory and, on their behalf, celebrated the triumph in the streets of Heaven, “leading captivity captive.” What more, then, do we need? Surely Christ is enough for us!  
16. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days. Do not put yourself under the bondage of any rules and regulations that may be made by men. If you choose to do anything, or to abstain from something else because you judge it to be right and beneficial, do so. Christ is your only Ruler and Leader—and if He does not command anything, let it not matter to you who does command it.

17. Which are a shadow of things to come. All this regard for meats, drinks, holy days and new moons is but a shadow—what is the great substance that is all-important?

17, 18. But the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels. Do not be beguiled by those who tell you that you ought to pay reverence to angels, saints and I know not what besides. One day is called St. Matthew’s and another is St. Michael’s. And one, I suppose, is St. Judas’s day—there are all sorts of supposed saints, some of whom are never mentioned in the Bible and about whom nobody ought to care at all! “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.”

18-20. Intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God. Therefore if you are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances? Such ordinances as these—

21, 22. (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men? I have actually seen this text quoted as though it stood as a matter of teaching—“Touch not; taste not; handle not”—whereas the Apostle here means, “Why are you subject to such ordinances of men when Christ has set you free from them all? If, with a view to the good of your fellow men, you choose not to touch, or taste, or handle, you will act very wisely. But, as far as your own conscience is concerned, do not submit to any merely human regulations as to your manner of life.”

23. Which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.  
**Col 3:1** If you then are risen with Christ. Leave all these outward rituals, formalities and ordinances of men.

1-3. Seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #273 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

÷Col 2.15

CHRIST TRIUMPHANT  
NO. 273

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH**MORNING, SEPTEMBER **4, 1859, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON**,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”***Col 2:15***.**

To the eye of reason the Cross is the center of sorrow and the lowest depth of shame as Jesus dies a malefactor’s death. He hangs upon the gallows of a felon and pours out His blood upon the common mount of doom with thieves for His companions. In the midst of mockery, jest, scorn, ribaldry and blasphemy, He gives up the ghost. Earth rejects Him and lifts Him from her surface. Heaven affords Him no light, but darkens the midday sun in the hour of His extremity. Deeper in woe than the Savior dived, imagination cannot descend. A blacker calumny than was cast on Him satanic malice itself could not invent. He hid not His face from shame and spitting—and what shame and spitting it was!

To the world the Cross must ever be the emblem of shame—to the Jew a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness. How different, however, is the view which presents itself to the eyes of Faith. Faith knows no shame in the Cross except the shame of those who nailed the Savior there. It sees no ground for scorn, but it hurls indignant scorn at Sin, the enemy which pierced the Lord. Faith sees woe, indeed, but from this woe it marks a fount of mercy springing. It is true it mourns a dying Savior, but it beholds Him bringing life and immortality to light at the very moment when His soul was eclipsed in the shadow of Death. Faith regards the Cross not as the emblem of shame, but as the token of Glory!

The sons of Belial lay the Cross in the dust but the Christian makes a constellation of it and sees it glittering in the seventh Heaven. Man spits upon it but Believers, having angels for their companions, bow down and worship Him who ever lives though once He was crucified. My Brethren, our text presents us with a portion of the view which Faith is certain to discover when its eyes are anointed with the eye-salve of the Holy Spirit. It tells us that the Cross was Jesus Christ’s field of triumph! There He fought and there He conquered, too.

As a victor on the Cross He divided the spoil. No, more than this—in our text the Cross is spoken of as being Christ’s triumphal chariot in which He rode when He led captivity captive and received gifts for men! Calvin thus admirably expounds the last sentence of our text—“The expression in the Greek, allows, it is true, of our reading, ‘in Himself.’ The connection of the passage, however, requires that we read it otherwise; for what would be meager as applied to Christ, suits admirably well as applied to the Cross. For as Paul had previously compared the Cross to a

signal trophy or show of triumph in which Christ led about His enemies, so he now also compares it to a triumphal car in which He showed Himself in great magnificence. For there is no tribunal so magnificent, no throne so stately, no show of triumph so distinguished, no chariot so elevated as is the gallows on which Christ has subdued Death and the devil, the Prince of Death—no, more—has utterly trodden them under His feet”

I shall, this morning, by God’s help, address you upon the two portions of the text. First, I shall endeavor to describe Christ as spoiling His enemies on the Cross. And having done that I shall lead your imagination and your faith further on to see the Savior in triumphal procession upon His Cross, leading His enemies captive and making a show of them openly before the eyes of the astonished universe.

I. First, our faith is invited, this morning, to behold CHRIST MAKING A SPOIL OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS. Satan, leagued with sin and death, had made this world the home of woe. The Prince of the power of the air, not content with his dominions in Hell, must need invade this fair earth. He found our first parents in the midst of Eden. He tempted them to forego their allegiance to the King of Heaven and they became at once his bond-slaves—bond-slaves forever, if the Lord of Heaven had not interposed to ransom them.

The voice of mercy was heard while the fetters were being riveted upon their feet, crying, “You shall yet be free. In the fullness of time there shall come One who shall bruise the serpent’s head and shall deliver his prisoners from the house of their bondage.” Long did the promise tarry. The earth groaned and travailed in its bondage. Man was Satan’s slave and heavy were the clanking chains which were upon his soul. At last, in the fullness of time, the Deliverer came forth born of a woman. This infant Conqueror was but a span long. He lay in the manger—He who was one day to bind the old dragon and cast him into the bottomless pit and set a seal upon him!

When the old serpent knew that his enemy was born, he conspired to put Him to death. He leagued with Herod to seek the young child that he might destroy Him. But the Providence of God preserved the future Conqueror—He went down into Egypt and there He was hidden for a little season. And when He had come to fullness of years, He made His public advent and began to preach liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. Then Satan again shot forth his arrows and sought to end the existence of the woman’s Seed. By different means he sought to slay Him before His time.

Once the Jews took up stones to stone Him, nor did they fail to repeat the attempt. They sought to cast Him headlong down from the brow of a hill. By all manner of devices they labored to take away His life but His hour was not yet. Dangers might surround Him but He was invulnerable till the time was come. At last the tremendous day arrived. Foot to foot the Conqueror must fight with the dread tyrant. A voice was heard in Heaven, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” And Christ Himself exclaimed, “Now is the crisis of this world; now must the Prince of Darkness be cast out.”

From the table of communion the Redeemer arose at midnight and marched forth to the battle. How dreadful was the contest! In the very first onset the mighty Conqueror seemed to be vanquished. Beaten to the earth at the first assault, He fell upon His knees and cried, “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from Me.” Revived in strength, made strong by Heaven, He no longer quailed and from that hour never did He utter a word which looked like renouncing the fight. All red with bloody sweat from the terrible skirmish, He dashed into the thick of the battle! The kiss of Judas was, as it were, the first sounding of the trumpet.

Pilate’s bar was the glittering of the spear. The cruel lash was the crossing of the swords. But the Cross was the center of the battle! There, on the top of Calvary, must the dread fight of eternity be fought! Now must the Son of God arise and gird His sword upon His thigh. Dread defeat or glorious conquest awaits the Champion of the Church. Which shall it be? We hold our breath with anxious suspense while the storm is raging. I hear the trumpet sound! The howls and yells of Hell rise in awful clamor! The pit is emptying out its legions! Terrible as lions, hungry as wolves and black as night the demons rush on in myriads. Satan’s reserve forces, those who had long been kept against this day of terrible battle, are roaring from their dens. See how countless are their armies and how fierce their countenances! Brandishing his sword the arch fiend leads the van, bidding his followers fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel!

Terrible are the leaders of the battle. Sin is there and all its innumerable offspring spitting forth the venom of asps and sinking their poison fangs in the Savior’s flesh. Death is there upon his pale horse and his cruel darts rend their way through the body of Jesus even to His inmost heart. He is “exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” Hell comes, with all its coals of juniper and fiery darts. But chief and head among them is Satan—remembering well the ancient day when Christ hurled him from the battlements of Heaven he rushes with all his malice yelling to the attack!

The darts shot into the air are so countless that they blind the sun. Darkness covers the battlefield and like that of Egypt it was a darkness which might be felt. Long does the battle seem to waver, for there is but One against many. One Man—no, listen, lest any should misunderstand me—one GOD stands in battle array against ten thousands of principalities and powers! On, on they come and He receives them all. Silently at first He permits their ranks to break upon Him, enduring terrible hardness to spare a thought for shouting.

But at last the battle cry is heard. He who is fighting for His people begins to shout, but it is a shout which makes the Church tremble. He cries, “I thirst!” The battle is so hot upon Him and the dust so thick that He is choked with thirst! He cries, “I thirst!” Surely, now, He is about to be defeated! Wait awhile—do you see yon heaps? All these have fallen beneath His arm and for the rest, fear not the issue! The enemy is but rushing to his own destruction! In vain his fury and his rage, for look, the last rank

is charging, the battle of ages is almost over!

At last the darkness is dispersed. Hark how the Conqueror cries. “It is finished!” And where are His enemies now? They are all dead! There lies the king of terrors, pierced through with one of his own darts! There lies Satan with his head all bleeding, broken! Yonder crawls the brokenbacked Serpent, writhing in ghastly misery! As for Sin, it is cut in pieces and scattered to the winds of Heaven! “It is finished,*”*cries the Conqueror, as He came with dyed garments from Bozrah, “I have trodden the winepress alone, I have trampled them in My fury and their blood is sprinkled on My garments.” And now He proceeds to divide the spoil.

We pause here to remark that when the spoil is divided it is a sure token that the battle is completely won. The enemy will never suffer the spoil to be divided among the conquerors as long as he has any strength remaining. We may gather from our text, of a surety, that Jesus Christ has totally routed, thoroughly defeated once and for all and put to retreat all His enemies or else He would not have divided the spoil.

And now, what does this expression mean of Christ dividing the spoil? I take it that it means, first of all, that He disarmed all His enemies. Satan came against Christ—he had in his hand a sharp sword called the Law, dipped in the poison of sin so that every wound which the Law inflicted was deadly. Christ dashed this sword out of Satan’s hand and there stood the Prince of Darkness unarmed! His helmet was split it two and his head was crushed as with a rod of iron! Death rose against Christ. The Savior snatched his quiver from him, emptied out all his darts, cut them in two, gave Death back the feather end but kept the poisoned barbs from him that he might never destroy the ransomed.

Sin came against Christ—but Sin was utterly cut in pieces. It had been Satan’s armor bearer, but its shield was cast away and it lay dead upon the plain. Is it not a noble picture to behold all the enemies of Christ—no, my Brothers and Sisters—all your enemies and mine, totally disarmed? Satan has nothing left, now, with which he may attack us! He may attempt to injure us but wound us he never can, for his sword and spear are utterly taken away! In the old battles, especially among the Romans, after the enemy had been overcome it was the custom to take away all their weapons and ammunition. Afterwards they were stripped of their armor and their garments, their hands were tied behind their backs and they were made to pass under the yoke. Now, even so has Christ done with Sin, Death, and Hell—He has taken their armor, spoiled them of all their weapons and made them all to pass under the yoke—so that now they are our slaves and we in Christ are conquerors of them who were mightier than we!

I take it this is the first meaning of dividing the spoil—total disarming of the adversary. In the next place, when the victors divide the spoil they carry away not only the weapons but all the treasures which belong to their enemies. They dismantle their fortresses and rifle all their stores so that in future they may not be able to renew the attack. Christ has done the like with all His enemies. Old Satan had taken away from us all our possessions. Satan had added Paradise to his territories. All the joy, happiness and peace of man, Satan had taken—not that he could enjoy them himself, but that he delighted to thrust us down into poverty and damnation.

Now, all our lost inheritances Christ has gotten back for us! Paradise is ours and more than all the joy and happiness that Adam had, Christ has brought back to us. O robber of our race, how are you spoiled and carried away captive! Did you despoil Adam of his riches? The second Adam has taken them from you! Did you cut the whole earth asunder and cause the waster to become desolate? The second Adam has defeated you—now shall the needy be remembered and again shall the meek inherit the earth! “Then is the prey of a great spoil divided, the lame take the prey.”

Moreover, when victors divide the spoil, it is usual to take away all the ornaments from the enemy—the crowns and the jewels. Christ on the Cross did the like with Satan. Satan had a crown on his head, a haughty diadem of triumph. “I fought the first Adam,” he said. “I overcame him and here’s my glittering diadem.” Christ snatched it from his brow in the hour when He bruised the serpent’s head. And now Satan cannot boast of a single victory—he is thoroughly defeated!

In the first skirmish he vanquished manhood, but in the second battle Manhood vanquished him! The crown is taken from Satan. He is no longer the prince of God’s people. His reigning power is gone! He may tempt, but he cannot compel. He may threaten, but he cannot subdue for the crown is taken from his head and the mighty are brought low. O sing unto the Lord a new song, all you His people! Make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms all you His redeemed, for He has broken in sunder the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron! He has broken the bow and cut the spear in sunder! He has burned the chariots in the fire! He has dashed in pieces our enemies and divided the spoil with the strong!

And now, what does this say to us? Simply this. If Christ on the Cross has spoiled Satan, let us not be afraid to encounter this great enemy of our souls. My Brethren, in all things we must be made like unto Christ. We must bear our cross and on that cross we must fight as He did with Sin, Death and Hell! Let us not fear. The result of the battle is certain, for as the Lord our Savior has overcome once, even so shall we most surely conquer in Him. Be you, none of you afraid with sudden fear when the Evil One comes upon you. If he accuse you, reply to him in these words— “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

If he condemns you, laugh him to scorn, crying—“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather has risen again.” If he threaten to divide you from Christ’s love, encounter him with confidence—“I am persuaded that neither things present nor things to come nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If he lets loose your sins upon you dash the Hell dogs aside with this—“If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” If Death should threaten you, shout in his very face—“O Grave! Where is your sting? O

Death! Where is your victory?”

Hold up the Cross before you! Let that be your shield and buckler and rest assured that as your Master not only routed the foe but afterwards took the spoil, it shall be even so with you! Your battles with Satan shall turn to your advantage. You shall become all the richer for your attacks. The more numerous they shall be the greater shall be your share of the spoil! Your tribulation shall work patience and your patience experience— and your experience hope—a hope that will not make you ashamed. Through much tribulation shall you inherit the kingdom and by the very attacks of Satan shall you be helped the better to enjoy the rest which remains for the people of God.

Put yourselves in array against sin and Satan. All you that bend the bow shoot at them—spare no arrows, for your enemies are rebels against God! Go up against them—put your feet upon their necks—fear not, neither be dismayed, for the battle is the Lord’s and He will deliver them into your hands! Be very courageous remembering that you have to fight a dragon without a sting! He may hiss, but his teeth are broken and his poison fangs extracted. You have to do battle with an enemy already scarred by your Master’s weapons. You have to fight with a naked enemy! Every blow you give him tells upon him for he has nothing to protect himself with!

Christ has stripped him naked, divided his armor and left him defenseless before his people. Be not afraid. The lion may howl, but he can never tear you in pieces. The enemy may rush in upon you with hideous noise and terrible alarms, but there is no real cause for fear. Stand fast in the Lord! You war against a king who has lost his crown. You fight against an enemy whose cheekbones have been crushed and the joints of whose loins have been loosed. Rejoice, rejoice in the day of battle, for it is for you but the beginning of an eternity of triumph!

I have thus endeavored to dwell upon the first part of the text. Christ on the Cross divided the spoil and He would have us do the same.  
II. The second part of our text refers not only to the dividing of the spoil but to THE TRIUMPH. When a Roman general had performed great feats in a foreign country, his highest reward was that the Senate should decree him a triumph. Of course there was a division of spoil made on the battlefield where each soldier and each captain took his share. But every man looked forward rapturously to the day when they should enjoy the public triumph. On a certain set day the gates of Rome were thrown open, the houses were all decorated with ornaments and the people climbed to the tops of the houses or stood in great crowds along the streets.  
The gates were opened and by-and-by the first legion began to stream in with its banners flying and its trumpets sounding. The people saw the stern warriors as they marched along the street returning from their blood-red fields of battle. After one half of the army had thus advanced, your eyes would rest upon one who was the center of all attraction—riding in a noble chariot drawn by milk-white horses—there came the conqueror himself, crowned with the laurel crown and standing erect! Chained to his chariot were the kings and mighty men of the regions which he had conquered.  
Immediately behind them came part of the booty. There were carried the ivory and the ebony and the beasts of the different countries which he had subdued. After these came the rest of the soldiery, a long, long stream of valiant men all of them abating the triumphs of their captain. Behind them came banners—the old flags which had floated aloft in the battle— the standards which had been taken from the enemy.  
And after these, large painted emblems of the great victories of the warriors. Upon one there would be a huge map depicting the rivers which they had crossed, or the seas through which the navy had found their way. Everything was represented in a picture and the populace gave a fresh shout as they saw the memorial of each triumph. And then, behind, together with the trophies, would come the prisoners of less eminent rank. Then the rear would be closed with the sound of trumpets adding to the acclamation of the throng. It was a noble day for old Rome! Children would never forget those triumphs! They would estimate their years from the time of one triumph to another. High holiday was kept. Women cast down flowers before the conqueror and he was the true monarch of the day.  
Now, our Apostle had evidently seen such a triumph, or read of it, and he takes this as a representation of what Christ did on the Cross. He says, “Jesus made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Have you ever thought that the Cross could be the scene of a triumph? Most of the old commentators can scarcely conceive it to be true. They say, “This must certainly refer to Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension.” But, nevertheless, so says the Scripture, even on the Cross, Christ enjoyed a triumph! Yes, while those hands were bleeding the acclamations of angels were being poured upon His head! Yes, while those feet were being torn with the nails, the noblest spirits in the world were crowding round Him with admiration!  
And when upon that blood-stained Cross He died in unutterable agonies, there was heard a shout such as never was heard before for the ransomed in Heaven—and all the angels of God with loudest harmony chanted His praise! Then was sung, in fullest chorus, the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb, for He had, indeed, cut Rahab and sorely wounded the dragon. Sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously! The Lord shall reign forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords!  
I do not feel able, however, this morning, to work out a scene so grand and yet so contrary to everything that flesh could guess as a picture of Christ actually triumphing on the Cross—in the midst of His bleeding, His wounds and His pains—actually being a triumphant victor and admired of all. I choose, rather, to take my text thus—the Cross is the ground of Christ’s ultimate triumph. He may be said to have really triumphed there because it was by that one act of His—that one offering of Himself—that He completely vanquished all His foes and forever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. In the Cross, to the spiritual eye, every victory of Christ is contained. It may not be there in fact, but it is there virtually—the germ of His glories may be discovered by the eye of faith in the agonies of the Cross. Bear with me while I humbly attempt to depict the triumph which now results from the Cross.  
Christ has forever overcome all His foes and divided the spoil upon the battlefield. And now, even at this day is He enjoying the well-earned reward and triumph of His fearful struggle. Lift up your eyes to the battlements of Heaven, the great metropolis of God! The pearly gates are wide open and the city shines with her jeweled walls like a bride prepared for her husband. Do you see the angels crowding to the battlements? Do you observe them on every mansion of the celestial city, eagerly desiring and looking for something which has not yet arrived?  
At last there is heard the sound of a trumpet and the angels hurry to the gates—the vanguard of the redeemed is approaching the city. Abel comes in alone, clothed in crimson garb, the herald of a glorious army of martyrs! Hark to the shout of acclamation! This is the first of Christ’s warriors, at once a soldier and a trophy, that have been delivered. Close at his heels there follow others who in those early times had learned the coming Savior’s fame.  
Behind them a mighty host may be discovered of patriarchal veterans who have witnessed to the coming of the Lord in a wanton age. See Enoch still walking with his God and singing sweetly—“Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints.” There, too, is Noah who had sailed in the ark with the Lord as his Pilot. Then follow Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and David—all mighty men of valor. Hearken to them as they enter! Every one of them waving his helmet in the air, cries, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be honor, and glory, and dominion, and power, forever and ever!”  
Look, my Brothers and Sisters, with admiration upon this noble army! Mark the heroes as they march along the golden streets everywhere meeting an enthusiastic welcome from the angels who have kept their first estate. On, on they pour, those countless legions—was there ever such a spectacle? It is not the pageant of a day, but the “show” of all time! For 4,000 years on streams the army of Christ’s redeemed! Sometimes there is a short rank, for the people have been often diminished and brought low, but soon a crowd succeeds, and on, on, still on they come, all shouting, all praising Him who loved them and gave Himself for them!  
But look! He comes! I see His immediate herald clad in a garment of camel’s hair and a leather girdle about his loins. The Prince of the House of David is not far behind! Let every eye be open! Now, mark, how not only angels, but the redeemed, crowd the windows of Heaven! He comes! He comes! It is Christ Himself! Lash the snow-white coursers up the everlasting hills. “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” Look, He enters in the midst of acclamations. It is He! But He is not crowned with thorns. It is He! And though His hands wear the scars, they are stained with blood no longer. His eyes are as a flame of fire and on His head are many crowns! And He has on His vesture and on His thigh written, KING of KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. He stands tall in that chariot which is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem! Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, He stands proclaimed the emperor of Heaven and earth! On, on He rides and louder than the noise of many waters and like great thunders are the acclamations which surrounds Him!  
Look how John’s vision is become a reality, for now we can see for ourselves and hear with our ears the new song whereof He writes, “They sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And You have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders—  
“And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lives forever and ever.”  
But who are those at His chariot wheels? Who are those grim monsters that come howling in the rear? I know them! First of all there is the arch enemy. Look at the old serpent, bound and fettered, how he writhes his ragged length along! His azure hues all tarnished with trailing in the dust! His scales despoiled of their once-vaunted brightness. Now is captivity led captive and death and Hell shall be cast into the Lake of Fire! With what derision is the chief of rebels regarded. How is he become the object of everlasting contempt. He that sits in the Heaven’s does laugh—the Lord does have him in derision.  
Behold how the serpent’s head is broken and the dragon is trampled under foot. And now regard attentively yon hideous monster, Sin, chained hand in hand with his satanic sire. See how he rolls his fiery eyeballs! Mark how he twists and writhes in agonies. Mark how he glares upon the holy city but is unable to spit his venom there, for he is chained and gagged and dragged along, an unwilling captive at the wheels of the Victor. And here, too, is old Death, with his darts all broken and his hands behind him—the grim king of terrors—he, too, is a captive! Hark to the songs of the redeemed, of those who have entered into Paradise, as they see these mighty prisoners dragged along!  
“Worthy is He,” they shout, “To live and reign at His Almighty Father’s side, for He has ascended up on high, He has led captivity captive and received gifts for men.” And now behind Him I see the great mass of His people streaming in. The Apostles arrive in one goodly fellowship hymning their Lord. And then their immediate successors—and then a long array of those who, through cruel mocking and blood, through flame and sword, have followed their Master. These are those whom the world was not worthy, brightest among the stars of Heaven! Regard, also, the mighty preachers and confessors of the faith, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Augustine and the like.  
Witness their holy unanimity in praising their Lord! Then let your eyes run along the glittering ranks till you come to the days of Reformation. I see in the midst of the squadron Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, three holy brothers! I see just before them Wickliffe, Huss and Jerome of Prague, all marching together. And then I see a number that no man can number, converted to God through these mighty reformers who now follow in the rear of the King of kings and Lord of lords! And looking down to our own time I see the stream broader and wider. For many are the soldiers who have in these last times entered into their Master’s triumph. We may mourn their absence from us, but we must rejoice in their presence with the Lord.  
But what is the unanimous shout? What is the one song that still rolls from the first rank to the last? It is this—“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!” Have they changed the tune? Have they supplanted His name by another? Have they put the crown on another head or elevated another hero into the chariot? Ah, no—they are content, still, to let the triumphant procession stream along its glorious length—still to rejoice as they behold fresh trophies of His love, for every soldier is a trophy, every warrior in Christ’s army is another proof of His power to save and His victory over death and Hell!  
I have not time to enlarge further, or else I might describe the mighty pictures at the end of the procession—for in the old Roman triumphs the deeds of the conqueror were all depicted in paintings—the towns he had taken, the rivers he had passed, the provinces he had subdued, the battles he had fought were represented in pictures and exposed to the view of the people—who with great festivity and rejoicing accompanied him in throngs, or beheld him from the windows of their houses and filled the air with their acclamations and applauses.  
I might present to you first of all the picture of Hell’s dungeons blown to atoms. Satan had prepared deep in the depths of darkness a prison house for God’s elect but Christ has not left one stone upon another. On the picture I see the chains broken in pieces, the prison doors burnt with fire and all the depths of the vast deep shaken to their foundations. On another picture I see Heaven open to all Believers. I see the gates that were fast shut heaved open by the golden lever of Christ’s Atonement.  
I see on one, another picture, the grave despoiled. I behold Jesus in it, slumbering for awhile and then rolling away the stone and rising to immortality and glory. But we cannot stay to describe these mighty pictures of the victories of His love. We know that the time shall come when the triumphant procession shall cease—when the last of His redeemed shall have entered into the city of happiness and of joy—and when, with the shout of a trumpet heard for the last time, He shall ascend to Heaven and take His people up to reign with God, even our Father, forever and ever, world without end.  
Our only question, and with that we conclude, is, have we a good hope through Divine Grace that we shall march in that tremendous procession? Shall we pass under review in that day of pomp and glory? Say, my Soul, shall you have an humble part in that glorious pageant? Will you follow at His chariot wheels? Will you join in the thundering hosannas? Shall your voice help to swell the everlasting chorus? Sometimes I fear it shall not. There are times when the awful question comes—what if my name should be left out when He should read the muster roll?  
Brothers and Sisters, does not that thought trouble you? But yet I put the question again. Can you answer it? Will you be there—shall you see this pomp? Will you behold Him triumph over sin, death and Hell at last? Can you answer this question? There is another, but the answer will serve for both—do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He your confidence and your trust? Have you committed your soul to His keeping? Reposing on His might can you say for your immortal spirit—  
*“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on You?”*  
If you can say that, your eyes shall see Him in the day of His glory—no, you shall share His glory and sit with Him upon His throne even as He has overcome and sat down with His Father upon His throne! I blush to preach as I have done this morning on a theme far beyond my power, yet I could not leave it unsung, but, as best I might, sing it. May God enlarge your faith and strengthen your hope! May He inflame your love and make you ready to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light so that when He shall come with flying clouds on wings of wind, you may be ready to meet Him and may with Him ascend to gaze forever on the vision of His Glory!  
May God grant this blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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÷Col 2.18

A WARNING TO BELIEVERS  
NO. 3466

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 16, 1870.

**“Let no man beguile you of your reward.”***Col 2:18***.**

THERE is an allusion here to the prize which was offered to the runners in the Olympic games. And at the outset it is well for us to remark how very frequently the Apostle Paul conducts us by his metaphors to the racecourse. Over and over again he is telling us so to run that we may obtain, bidding us to strive and, at other times, to agonize, and speaks of wrestling and contending. Ought not this make us feel what an intense thing the Christian life is—not a thing of sleepiness or haphazard, not a thing to be left, now and then, to a little superficial consideration? It must be a matter which demands all our strength, so that when we are saved there is a living principle put within us which demands all our energies and gives us energy over and above any that we ever had before! Those who dream that carelessness will find its way to Heaven have made a great mistake. The way to Hell is neglect, but the way to Heaven is very different. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” A little matter of neglect brings you to ruin, but our Master’s words are, “Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek”—merely seek—“to enter in, and shall not be able.” Striving is needed more than seeking! Let us pray that God the Holy Spirit would always enable us to be in downright, awful earnest about the salvation of our souls. May we never count this a matter of secondary importance, but may we seek first and beyond everything else, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. May we lay hold on eternal life—may we so run that we may obtain.

I would press this upon your memories because I observe—observe it in myself as well as in my fellow Christians, that we are often more earnest about the things of this life than we are about the things of the life to come. We are all impressed with the fact that in these days of competition, if a man would not be run over and crushed beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of poverty, he must exert himself. No man now seems able to keep his head above water with the faint swimmer strokes which our forefathers used to give. We have to strive—and the bread that perishes has to be labored for. Shall it be that this poor world shall engross our earliest thoughts and our latest cares, and shall the world to come have only now and then a consideration? No! May we love our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our strength—and may we lay our body, soul and spirit upon the altar of Christ’s service—for these are but our reasonable sacrifices to Him.

Now the Apostle, in the text before us, gives us a warning which comes to the same thing, however it is interpreted. But the passage is somewhat difficult of rendering and there have been several meanings given to it. Out of these there are three meanings which have been given of the text before us which are worthy of notice. “Let no man beguile you of your reward” The Apostle, in the first place, may mean here—

I. LET NO MAN BEGUILE ANY OF YOU who profess to be followers of Christ, of the great reward that will await the faithful at the last.  
Now, my Brothers and Sisters, we have, many of us, commenced the Christian race, or we profess to have done so—but the number of the starters is far greater than the number of the winners! “They that run in a race, run all, but one receives the prize.” “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Many commence, apparently, in the Christian career, but after a while, though they did run well, something hinders them that they do not obey the Truths of God and they go out from us because they were not of us, or if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us. Now we may expect, now that we have commenced to run, that some will come and try to turn us out of the racecourse openly—not plausibly and with sophistry—but with an open and honest wickedness. Some will tell us plainly that there is no reward to run for, that our religion is all a mistake, that the pleasures of this world are the only things worth seeking, that there are delights of the flesh and the lusts thereof, and that we should do well to enjoy them. We all meet the Atheist with his sneer and with his ringing laugh. We shall meet with all kinds of persons who will, to our faces, tell us to turn back, for there is no Heaven, there is no Christ, or, if there is, it is not worth our while to take so much trouble to find Him. Take heed of these people! Meet them face to face with dauntless courage. Mind not their sneers. If they persecute you, only, reckon this to be an honor to you—for what is persecution but the tribute which wickedness pays to righteousness? And what is it, indeed, but the recognition of the Seed of the woman when the seed of the serpent would gladly bite His heel?  
But the Apostle does not warn you so much against those people who openly come to you in this way. He knows that you will be on the alert against them. He gives a special warning against some others who would beguile you—that is to say—who will try to turn you out of the right road, but who will not tell you that they mean to do so. They pretend that they are going to show you something better than what you have, to teach you something that you knew not before, some improvement upon what you have here learned. In Paul’s day there were some who took off the attention of the Christian from the worship of God to the worship of angels. “Angels,” they said, “these are holy beings. They keep watch over you— you should speak of them with great respect.” And then, when they grew bolder, they said, “You should ask for their protection.” And then after a little while they said, “You should worship them. You should make them intermediate intercessors!” And so, step by step, they went on and established an old heresy which lasted for many years in the Christian Church—and which is not dead, even now—and thus the worship of angels crept in.  
And now-a-days you will meet with men who will say, “That bread upon the Table—why, it represents the body of Jesus Christ to you when you come to the Lord’s Supper. Therefore you ought to treat that bread with great respect.” By-and-by they will get a little bolder, and then they say, “As it represents Christ, you may worship it, pay it respect as if it were Christ.” By-and-by it will come to this, that you must have a napkin under your chin, lest you should drop a crumb. And they will say it would be very wicked if a drop of the sacred wine should cling to your moustache when you drink! And there will be the directions which are given in some of the papers coming out from the High Church party— absurdities which are only worthy of the nursery—about the way in which the holy bread is to be eaten and the holy wine is to be drunk— bringing in idolatry—sheer, clear idolatry, under the pretence of improving upon the too bare simplicity of the worship of Christ! Be careful of the very first step, I pray you.  
Or, perhaps, it may come to you in another shape. One will say to you, “The place in which you worship—is it not very dear to you? That seat where you have been accustomed to sit and listen, is it not dear?” And your natural instincts will say, “Yes.” Then it will go a little farther. “That place is holy—it ought never to be used for anything but worship.” Then a little farther it will be, “Oh, that is the House of God,” and you will come to believe that, contrary to the words which you know are given to you by the Holy Spirit, that God dwells not in temples made with hands—that is to say, in these buildings—and you will have, by degrees, a worship of places, and a worship of days, and a worship of bread, and a worship of wine! And then it will be said to you, “Your minister, has he not often cheered you? Well then, you should reverence him—call him, ‘Reverend.’” Go a little farther and you will call him, “Father.” Yet a little farther and he will be your confessor! Get a little farther and he will be your infallible Pope! It is all done step by step! The first step seems to be very harmless, indeed. Indeed, it is a kind of voluntary humility! You look as if you were humbling yourselves and were paying reverence to these things for God’s sake—whereas the objective is to get you to pay reverence to them, instead of to God—and here the Apostle’s words come in, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” They will often attack you in that insidious manner by setting up other objects of reverence besides those which spiritual men worship!  
So, too, they will, by slow degrees, try to insinuate a different way of living from that which is the true life of the Christian. You who have believed in Jesus are saved. Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. You are accustomed to go to Jesus Christ constantly to receive that washing of the feet of which He spoke to Peter when He said, “He that is washed needs not except to wash his feet, for he is clean every whit.” You go to Him with, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” But there will be some who will come in and tell you that to live in that way by a simple faith in Jesus Christ is not, perhaps, the best way. Could you not get a little farther? Could you not lead the life of those recluses who mortify the flesh in such a way that at last they come to have no sins, but commence to be perfect in themselves? Could you not begin, at least in some degree, to commit your soul’s care to some priest, or to some friend? And instead of making every place holy and every day a holy day, would it not be well to fast on such-and-such days in the week, to scrupulously observe this rule and the other rule and walk by the general opinion of the ancient Church, or by the Anglicanum Directorium, or some one of those books which profess to show how they used to do it a thousand years ago? All this may have a great show of wisdom, antiquity and beauty—there may be a semblance of everything that is holy about it and names that should never be mentioned without reverence may be appended to it all—but listen to the Apostle as he says, “Beware lest any man beguile you of your reward,” for if they get you away from living upon Christ as a poor sinner from day to day by simple confidence in Him, they will beguile you of your reward!  
There is another party who will seek to beguile you of your reward by bringing in speculative notions instead of the simple Truths of God’s Word. There is a certain class of persons who think that a sermon is a good one when they cannot understand it and who are always impressed with a man whose words are long! And if his sentences are involved, they feel, poor souls, that because they do not know what he is talking about, there is no doubt that he is a very wise and learned man! And after a while, when he does propound something that they can catch at, though it may be quite contrary to what they have learned at their mother’s knee or from their father’s Bible, yet they are ready to be led off by it! There are many men, now-a-days, who seem to spend their time in nothing else but in spinning new theories and inventing new systems. They gut the Gospel, taking the very soul and heart out of it, and leave nothing but the mere skin and outward bones. The life and marrow of the Gospel is being taken away by their learning, by their philosophies, by their refinements, by their bringing everything down to the test of this wonderfully enlightened 19th Century, to which we are all, I suppose, bound to defer! But a voice comes to us, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” Stand fast to the old Truths of God—they will outlast all these philosophies! Stand fast to the old way of living—it will outlast all the inventions of men! Stand fast by Christ, for you need no other object of worship but Himself!  
The Apostle gives us this warning, “Let no man beguile you of your reward,” reminding us that these persons are very likely to beguile us. They will beguile us by their character. Have I not often heard young people say of such-and-such a preacher who preaches error, “But he is so good a man!” That is not the point. “Though we, or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” If the life of the man should be blameless as the life of Christ, yet if he preaches to you other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, take no heed of him! He wears but the sheep’s clothing, and is a wolf, after all. Some will plead, “But such-and-such a man is so eloquent.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters, may the day never come when your faith shall stand in the words of men! What is a ready orator, after all, that he should convince your hearts? Are there not ready orators caught any day for everything? Men speak, speak fluently, and speak well in the cause of evil! And there are some that can speak much more fluently and more eloquently for evil than any of our poor tongues are ever likely to do for the right! But words, words, words, flowers of rhetoric, oratory—are these the things that saved you? Are you so foolish that having begun in the spirit by being convicted of your sins, having begun by being led simply to Christ and putting your trust in Him—are you now to be led astray by these poetic utterances and flowery periods of men? God forbid! Let nothing of this kind beguile you!  
Then there will be added to these remarks that the man is not

nly very good and very eloquent, but that he is very earnest—he seems very humble-minded. Yes, and of old they wore rough garments to deceive, and in the context of the text we find that those persons were noted for their voluntary humility and their worship of angels! Satan knows very well that if he comes in black, he will be discovered, but if he puts on the garb of an angel of light, then men will think he comes from God and so will be deceived. “By their fruits you shall know them.” If they give you not the Gospel—if they exalt not Christ, if they bear not witness to salvation through the precious blood, if they do not lift up Jesus Christ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness—have nothing to do with them, speak they as they may! “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” Through it should happen to be your relative, one whom you love, one who may have many claims on your respect—let no man, let no man, however plausible may be his speech or eminent his character—beguile you of your reward!  
Recollect, you professors, you lose the reward if you lose the road to the reward. He that runs may run very fast, but if he does not run the course, he wins not the prize. You may believe false Doctrine with great earnestness, but you will find it false, for all that! You may give yourself up indefatigably to the pursuit of the wrong religion, but it will ruin your souls! A notion is abroad that if you are but earnest and sincere, you will be all right. Permit me to remind you that if you travel ever so earnestly to the north, you will never reach the south. And if you earnestly take prussic acid, you will die! And if you earnestly cut off a limb, you will be wounded. You must not only be earnest, but you must be right in it! Hence is it necessary to say, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” “I bear them witness,” said the Apostle, “that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, but went about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.” Oh, may we not be beguiled, then, so as to miss the reward of Heaven at the last!  
But I must pass on, especially as the light fails us this evening—I hope it is prognostic of a coming shower. Here is a second rendering which may be given to the text—  
II. LET NO MAN DOMINEER OVER YOU.  
This rendering, or something analogous to it, is in the French translation. One of the great expositors in his commentary upon this passage refers it to the judges at the end of the course who sometimes would give the reward to the wrong person, and the person who had really run well might thus be deprived of his reward. Now, however close a man may be to Christ, the world, instead of honoring him for it, will, on the contrary, censure and condemn him—and hence the Apostle’s exhortation is, “Let no man domineer over you.”  
And, my Brothers and Sisters, I would earnestly ask you to remember this, first, as to your course of action. If you conscientiously believe that you are right in what you are doing, care very little who is pleased or who is displeased. If you are persuaded in your own soul that what you believe and what you do are acceptable to God, whether they are acceptable to man or not is of very small consequence! You are not man’s servant, you do not look to man for your reward and, therefore, you need not care what man’s opinion may be in this matter. Be just and fear not! Tread in the footsteps of Christ, follow what may. Live not on the breath of men. Let not their applause make you feel great, for perhaps then their censure will make you faint. Let no man in this respect domineer over you, but let Christ be your Master, and look to His smile.  
So not only with regard to your course of action, but also with reference to your confidence, let no man domineer over you. If you put your trust in Jesus Christ, there are some who will say it is presumption. Let them say it is presumption! “Wisdom is justified of all her children,” and so shall faith be. If you take the promise of God and rest upon it, there will be some who will say that you are hare-brained fanatics. Let them say it! They that trust in Him shall never be confounded. The result will honor your faith. You have but to wait a little while and, perhaps, they that now censure you will have to hold up their hands in astonishment and say with you, “What has God worked?” Your confidence in Christ, especially my dear young Friend, I trust does not depend upon the smile of your relatives. If it did, then their frown might crush it. Walk with your Savior in the lowly walk of holy confidence, and let not your faith rest in man, but in the smile of God!  
Let no man domineer over you, again, by judging your motives. Men will always give as bad a reason as they can for a good man’s actions. It seems to be innate in human nature never to give man credit for being right if you can help it, and often tender minds have been greatly wounded when they have been misrepresented and their actions have been imputed to sinister and selfish motives—when they have really desired to serve Christ. But do not let your heart be broken about that. You will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ—do not care about the petty judgment seats of men! Go on with your Master’s work dauntlessly and fearlessly. Let them say, as David’s brothers said of him, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart have you come to see the battle.” You go and get Goliath’s head and bring it back—and that shall be the best answer to these sneering ones. When they see that God is with you and that He has given you the triumph, you shall have honor, even in the eyes of those who now ridicule you! I think sometimes the Christian should have very much the same bravado against the judgment of men as David had when Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out and said, “How glorious was the King of Israel, today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants.” And he said, “It was before the Lord, and I will yet be more vile than thus.” Let your eyes be to God and forget the eyes of men! Live so that whether they know what you do, or do not know, you will not care, for your conduct will bear the blaze of the great Judgment Day and, therefore, the criticisms of earth do not affect you! Let no man domineer over you.  
So may I put it in another light—let no man sway your conscience so as to lead you. I am always anxious, my dear Hearers, that whatever respect I may ever win from you—and I trust I may have your esteem and your affection—yet that you will never believe a Doctrine simply because I utter it! Unless I can confirm it from the Word of God, away with it! If it is not according to the teaching of the Lord and Master, I beseech you follow me not. Follow me only as far as I follow Christ! And so with every other man. Let it be God’s Truth, God’s Word, the Holy Spirit’s witness to that Word in your soul that you are seeking after! And rest, I pray you, never short of that, for if you do, your faith will stand merely in the wisdom of men—and when the man who helped you to believe is gone, perhaps your faith may be gone, too—when you most need its comforting power! No, let no man domineer over you, but press forward in the Christian race, looking unto Jesus, and looking unto Jesus only!  
But now a third meaning belongs to the text. A happy circumstance it is, this dark night, that the preacher does not need to use his manuscript, for if he did, his sermon would certainly come to an end right now. But here is this point, “Let no man beguile you of your reward.” It may mean this—  
III. LET NO MAN ROB YOU OF THE PRESENT REWARD WHICH YOU HAVE IN BEING A CHRISTIAN.  
Let no man deprive you of the present comfort which your faith should bring to you. Let me, just for a few minutes, have your attention while I speak upon this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I, if we are believers in Christ, are this day completely pardoned. There is no sin in God’s book against us. We are wholly and completely justified! The righteousness of Jesus Christ covers us from head to foot and we stand before God as if we had never sinned! Now let no man rob you of this reward. Do not be tempted by anything that is said to doubt the completeness of a believer in Christ. Hold this, and as you hold it, enjoy it! Do not let the man whom you have most to fear, beguile you. Even though conscience should upbraid you and you should have many grave reasons for doubt, as you imagine, yet if you believe in Jesus, stand to it—“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus! He that believes in Him is not condemned! I have believed and I am not condemned. Neither will He permit condemnation to be thundered against me, for Christ has borne my sin for me and I am clear in Him.” Let no man beguile you of the reward of feeling that you are complete in Christ!  
Further, you who have believed in Jesus Christ are safe in Christ. Because He lives, you shall live also. Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? He has said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” Now there are some who will tell you that you are not safe and that it is dangerous for you to believe that you are. Let no man beguile you of this reward! You are saved. If you are believing on Him, He will keep you, and you may sing, “Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy, unto Him be glory.” Hold to that blessed Truth of God that you are in Jesus—safe in Jesus Christ!  
There is a third blessed Truth, that not only are you pardoned and safe in Christ, but you are accepted at this moment in the Beloved. Your acceptance with God does not rest upon anything in you. You are accepted because you are in Christ, accepted for Christ’s sake. Now sometimes you will get robbed of this reward if you listen to the voice which says, “Why, there is still sin in you! Your prayers are imperfect! Your actions are stained.” Yes, but let no men beguile you of this conviction that, sinner as you are, you are still accepted in Christ Jesus!  
The Lord grant that you may feel this within and let no man beguile you of your reward as long as you live! May you live and die in the enjoyment of it, Beloved, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Ephesians 4;** *Eph 6:1-15***.**

**Ephesians 4.**  
Verses 1, 2. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. It is a loving call. Walk lovingly. It is the condescension of God that called you. Be, therefore, lowly. It is God in tenderness who has loved you. Be, therefore, meek, “forbearing one another in love.”

3-6. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Therefore, strive for unity. Woe unto those who divide Believers—who rob them of love to one another—who set up another Gospel which is not another, or in any way detract from the unity of the body of Christ.

7. But unto everyone of us is given Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. It does not mean that God gives stingingly, but that He gives according to our capacity to receive. We are not all made with the same measure of capacity because we are not all intended to fill the same office—and God gives everyone of us as much Grace as we are prepared to receive. The Lord enlarge our hearts that we may hold more of His Grace, “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

8-10. Therefore He said, When he ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. Now what were the gifts He gave? He rode up to Heaven in triumph. And in Roman triumphs they scattered gold and silver among the people to show the greatness of the trophies which the warriors had brought home. So Christ, when He ascended up on high, scattered gifts among the sons of men. And what were these? Why they were men, for men are God’s possession—the Man, Christ Jesus, first, and then those whom He uses for Himself afterwards.

11-13. And he gave some, Apostles, and some, Prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. We have not come to that yet. Therefore we need instruction. We need edifying or building up, and so the Lord gives to His Church according to His own mind and will, evangelists, pastors and the like. Sometimes there are pastors whom God never sent—and a man may take upon himself the voice of an evangelist who was never called—and consequently they are not gifts of God to the churches and is a waste of their strength. But if we have those whom God gives, we shall find a priceless gift in the bestowal of such men upon the Church of God!

14-16. That we henceforth are no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. You see then, Brothers and Sisters, where we are. We are each one put into his place to do something for the entire body. No limb of the body lives to itself. It is only healthy when it ministers to the health of the whole body. We are nothing, except as we are joined to the rest of God’s people, and especially joined to Him who is our glorious Head.

17-19. This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. This, the member of the body of Christ will never do! The Head is holy, so will the members be by that Holy Spirit who sanctifies us!

20. But you have not so learned Christ. What a beautiful expression this is! It does not say, “Learned the Doctrine of Christ,” or, “the precept of Christ,” though that were a grand Truth, but we learn Christ, Himself! Our school book is Christ! The copy by which we write is Christ! The image to which we desire to be conformed is Christ! “You have not so learned Christ.”

21, 22. If so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts— You have done with it. You put it off as a beggar puts off his rags when he has fresh garments given him!

23-25. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Therefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. You know the eye will not deceive the head. There is no part of the body that will deceive the rest. If the foot perceives that there is a trap, it tells the body and it does not lead it astray. If the nostril perceives an evil smell, it tells the body, that it may escape from the noxious odor. The body is true to itself. So if we are members, one of another, lying must be abhorrent. Every thought of it in any shape must be detestable to us.

26. Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Be angry sometimes. A man that is never angry, surely has no strong convictions in him, for he that is not angry at evil can scarcely be thought to rejoice in that which is good. But anger is a dog that is very apt to bite the wrong persons. Therefore, be you angry, and sin not. Anger is like fire. Let it always be put out at night. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” but if it lights during the day, keep it in the grate— keep it in its proper place, for if fire takes hold where it should not, the house may be destroyed and the man, himself, may perish in the fire. If you are angry, as you sometimes must be, “be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath.” They say that the stings of some obnoxious creatures will not die until the sun goes down. Well, let the sting of anger die when the sun goes down. Rake out the fire when the sun is down. Do not keep it blazing all night long, ready for the morning. Let it go out, lest our anger become hatred and become malice.

27. Neither give place to the devil. He is standing at the door. If you give him a seat, he will come in and it is very easy to do so—to make an opportunity for the devil to come in. “Neither give place to the devil.” Idle persons tempt the devil to depart by being busy—by being prayerful, and by being much with God. Give no place to the devil.

28. Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labor—Honest industry is the cure for dishonesty.  
28. Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. What a splendid change from a thief, up to one that gives to him that needs! Now, between them, we should have put, “Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor with his hands”—a thing which is good—“that he may be able to provide things honest for himself.” A very good idea, too, but the like Christian thought is that he may labor, working with his hands that he may have, to give. I wonder how many, even of professing Christians, think of this—that the objective of labor should be that they may have to give? There are some who think the objective is that we may have, to keep—that we may have, to hoard—but I say Christ, by His Apostle, teaches us that we should labor that we may have, to give to him that needs.  
29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth. Putrid is the word—“no putrid communication”—no word, therefore, which tends to do harm to the purest mind—nothing which is unsavory. Therefore, also, nothing that is untrue—nothing that is slanderous—nothing that would injure my neighbor. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” “You may as well say it as think it,” says one. By no manner of means! If you think it, it will do you harm—if you say it, it will do hurt to others! You may have a bottle of poison and it is much better to keep the cork in, for if somebody should drink it, then they will die. No, “let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.”  
30-31. But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Why does the Apostle say “clamor”? Why, because when people are angry they generally talk very loud, and I believe that if persons would correct their tone of voice and resolve, they will not speak above their usual tone! When they feel heated and provoked, it would greatly assist to check the abolition of passion. So the Apostle puts in, “Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and loud talking—all clamor and evil speaking—be put away from you with all malice.”  
32. And be you kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.

*Ephesians 6.*

Verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Fitting by nature and pleasing in the sight of God.  
2-4. Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth. And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. For the duties are like birds with two wings, or like a pair of scales—balance for each side. There is the child’s duty, but there is the parent’s duty, too.  
5-9. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he is bond or free. And, you masters, do the same things unto them. Mind that! We may hear a good deal about the duties of servants. Let us hear something about the duties of masters and mistresses. “You masters, do the same things unto them.”

9. Forbearing threats: knowing that your Master also is in Heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. Very beautifully balanced is the whole system of Gospel morals. There is no undue advantage given by the fact of our being rendered equal in Christ, so that the servant is to be less obedient to the master, or the child to the parent—neither is there any undue power given to those who are in authority! But the Grace of God teaches all to do unto all as we would that they should do unto us.

10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord. You cannot do right if you are not strong. Unless you have the backbone of principle—unless you have spiritual muscle and sinew by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in you, you cannot continue to do that which is right. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.”

10, 11. And in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God. First, be strong, and then put on armor. It is no use putting armor on a weak man, or else it will be what James I said it was—a capital invention, he said, because he who wore it would come to no harm and certainly do no harm, for he could not stir in it. Now you must be strong, first, but then not trust in your strength, but put on the armor which is here described. And yet it would be useless to have the armor unless you are first strong. “Put on the whole armor of God.”

11-13. That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. To keep your ground, not to give way in any respect! And blessed is that man whose name is Stand-Fast, and whose practice is to hold fast—“having done all to stand.”

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. Nothing will so tighten up your garments and keep them right as a belt of sincerity and truthfulness. If we are not true, whatever else we are, we are but loosely arrayed. We shall come to mischief. “Having your loins girt about with truth.”

14. And having on the breastplate of righteousness. A grand protection when God has given you to be holy, and when the principle which covers your heart and shields your members is righteousness!

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Peace in your own heart, peace with God, peace with man. Peacefulness and peace. No shoes like these! A man that has a merry heart makes many a mile fly beneath him, but a heavy heart is a slow traveler. “Your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1530 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Col 3.1

FOLLOWING THE RISEN CHRIST  
NO. 1530

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 28, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”***Col 3:1-2***.**

THE resurrection of our Divine Lord from the dead is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Perhaps I might more accurately call it the keystone of the arch of Christianity, for if that fact could be disproved, the whole fabric of the Gospel would fall to the ground. If Jesus Christ is not risen, then is our preaching in vain and your faith is also in vain—you are yet in your sins. If Christ is not risen, then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished and we, ourselves, in missing so glorious a hope as that of Resurrection, are, of all men, the most miserable! Because of the great importance of His Resurrection, our Lord was pleased to give many Infallible proofs of it, by appearing again and again in the midst of His followers.

It would be interesting to search out how many times He appeared. I think we have mention of some 16 manifestations. He showed Himself openly before His disciples and did eat and drink with them. They touched His hands and His side and heard His voice and knew that it was the same Jesus that was crucified. He was not content with giving evidence to the ears and to the eyes, but even to the sense of touch He proved the reality of His Resurrection. These appearances were very varied. Sometimes He gave an interview to one alone, either to a man, as to Cephas, or to a woman, as to Magdalene. He conversed with two of His followers as they went to Emmaus and with the company of the Apostles by the sea. We find Him at one moment among the 11 when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews and at another time in the midst of an assembly of more than 500 brethren, who, years later, were, most of them, living witnesses to the fact.

They could not all have been deceived. It is not possible that any historical fact could have been placed upon a better basis of credibility than the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead. This is put beyond all dispute and question and it was done on purpose because it is essential to the whole Christian system. For this same cause the Resurrection of Christ is commemorated frequently. There is no ordinance in Scripture of any one Lord’s-Day in the year being set apart to commemorate the rising of Christ from the dead and for this reason every Lord’s-Day is the memorial of our Lord’s Resurrection. Wake up any Lord’s-Day you please, whether in the depth of winter, or in the warmth of summer and you may sing—

*“Today He rose and left the dead,*

***And Satan’s empire fell!  
Today the saints  
His triumph spread,  
And all His wonders tell.”***

To set apart an Easter Sunday for special memory of the Resurrection is a human device for which there is no Scriptural command. But to make every Lord’s-Day an Easter Sunday is due to Him who rose early on the first day of the week. We gather together on the first, rather than upon the seventh day of the week, because redemption is even a greater work than creation and more worthy of commemoration and because the rest which followed creation is far outdone by that which ensues upon the completion of redemption! Like the Apostles, we meet on the first day of the week and hope that Jesus may stand in our midst and say, “Peace be unto you.”

Our Lord has lifted the Sabbath from the old and rusted hinges whereon the Law had placed it long before and set it on the new golden hinges which His love has fashioned. He has placed our rest day, not at the end of a week of toil, but at the beginning of the rest which remains for the people of God. Every first day of the week we should meditate upon the rising of our Lord and seek to enter into fellowship with Him in His risen life. Never let us forget that all who are in Him rose from the dead in His rising.

Next in importance to the fact of the Resurrection is the doctrine of the federal headship of Christ and the unity of all His people with Him. It is because we are in Christ that we become partakers of everything that Christ did—we are circumcised with Him, dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him because we cannot be separated from Him. We are members of His body and not a bone of Him can be broken. Because that union is most intimate, continuous and indissoluble, therefore all that concerns Him concerns us and as He rose, so all His people have arisen in Him! They are risen in two ways. First, representatively. All the elect rose in Christ in the day when He quit the tomb. He was justified, or declared to be clear of all liabilities on account of our sins by being set free from the prison of the tomb.

There was no reason for detaining Him in the sepulcher, for He had discharged the debts of His people by dying “unto sin once.” He was our Hostage and our Representative and when He came forth from His bonds we came forth in Him. We have endured the sentence of the Law in our Substitute. We have lain in its prison and even died under its death warrant and now we are no longer under its curse. “Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.”

Next to this representative resurrection comes our spiritual resurrection, which is ours as soon as we are led by faith to believe in Jesus Christ. Then it my be said of us, “And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” The resurrection blessing is to be perfected, by-and-by, at the appearing of our Lord and Savior, for then our bodies shall rise again if we fall asleep before His coming. He redeemed our manhood in its entirety—spirit, soul and body—and He will not be content until the resurrection which has passed upon our spirit shall pass upon our body, too. These dry bones shall live! Together with our dead body they shall rise—

*“When He arose ascending high,  
He showed our feet the way;  
Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly  
At the great rising day.”*

Then shall we know in the perfection of our resurrection beauty that we are, indeed, completely risen in Christ and “as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

This morning we shall only speak of our fellowship with Christ in His Resurrection as to our own spiritual resurrection. Do not misunderstand me as if I thought the resurrection to be only spiritual, for a literal rising from the dead is yet to come. But our text speaks of spiritual resurrection and I shall, therefore, endeavor to set it before you.

I. First, then, LET US CONSIDER OUR SPIRITUAL RISING WITH Christ—“If you then are risen with Christ.” Though the words look like a supposition they are not meant to be. The Apostle casts no doubt and raises no question, but merely puts it thus for argument’s sake. It might just as well be read, “Since you then are risen in Christ.” The “if” is used logically, not theologically—by way of argument and not by way of doubt. All who believe in Christ are risen with Christ. Let us meditate on this Truth of God. For, first, we were “dead in trespasses and sins,” but having believed in Christ we have been quickened by the Holy Spirit and we are dead no longer!

There we lay in the tomb, ready to become corrupt—yes, some of us were corrupt—the marks of the worm of sin were upon our character and the foul stench of actual sin arose from us. More or less, according to the length of time in which we abode in that death and according to the circumstances with which we were surrounded, death worked in us corruption. We lay in our death quite unable to raise ourselves. Ours were eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear; a heart that could not love and withered hands that could not be stretched out to give the touch of faith. We were even as they that go down into the Pit, as those that have been long dead—only we were in a worse plight than those actually dead, for we were responsible for all our omissions and inabilities.

We were as guilty as if we had power, for the loss of moral power is not the loss of moral responsibility! We were, therefore, in a state of spiritual death of the most fearful kind. The Holy Spirit visited us and made us live. We remember the first sensation of life, some of us—how it seemed to tingle in our soul’s veins with sharp and bitter pain—just as drowning persons, when life is coming back to them, suffer great pain. Conviction was worked in us and confession of sin. A dread of judgment to come and a sense of present condemnation were present, but these were tokens of life and that life gradually deepened and opened up until the eyes were opened—we could see Christ! Our hands ceased to be withered and we stretched them out and touched His garment’s hem. Our feet began to move in the way of obedience and our heart felt the sweet glow of love within.

Then the eyes, not content with only seeing, fell to weeping and afterwards, when the tears were wiped away, they flashed and sparkled with delight. And oh, my Brothers and Sisters, believers in Jesus, you were not spiritually dead any longer! On Christ you have believed and that grand act proves that you are dead no more! You have been quickened by God according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. Now, Beloved, you are new creatures—the product of a second birth, begotten again in Christ Jesus unto newness of life! Christ is your life—such a life as you never knew before, nor could have known apart from Him. If you then are risen with Christ you walk in newness of life while the world abides in death!

Let us advance another step. We are risen with Christ and, therefore, there has been worked in us a wonderful change. When the dead shall rise, they will not appear as they now are. The buried seed rises from the ground, but not as a seed, for it puts forth green leaves and bud and stem and gradually develops expanding flowers and fruit and even so we wear a new form, for we are renewed after the image of Him that created us in righteousness and holiness! I ask you to consider the change which the Spirit of God has worked in the Believer—a wonderful change, indeed! Before regeneration our soul was as our body will be when it dies and we read that, “it is sown in corruption.” There was corruption in our mind and it was working irresistibly towards every evil and offensive thing.

In many, the corruption did not appear upon the surface, but it worked within. In others it was conspicuous and fearful to look upon. How great the change! For now the power of corruption within us is broken! The new life has overcome it, for it is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Corruption is upon the old nature, but it cannot touch the new, which is our true and real self. Is it not a great thing to be purged of the filthiness which would have ultimately brought us down to Hell where the unquenchable fire burns and the undying worm feeds upon the corrupt?

Our old state was further like that which comes upon the body at death because it was a state of dishonor. You know how the Apostle says of the body, “It is sown in dishonor” and certainly no corpse wears such dishonor as that which rests upon a man who is dead in trespasses and sins. Why, of all things in the world that deserve shame and contempt, a sinful man is certainly the most so! He despises his Creator; he neglects his Savior; he chooses evil instead of good and puts the Light of God from him because his deeds are evil and, therefore, he prefers the darkness. In the judgment of all pure spirits, a sinful man is a dishonorable man.

But oh how changed is man when the Grace of God works within him, for then he is honorable. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” What an honor this is! Heaven itself contains not a more honorable being than a renewed man! Well may we cry with David, “What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?” But when we see man, in the Person of Jesus, made to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands and know that Jesus has made us kings and priests unto God, we are filled with amazement that God should so exalt us! The Lord Himself has said, “ Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” “Unto you therefore which believe he is an honor,” for so the original text may run. A precious Christ makes us precious—such honor have all the saints!

When a body is buried, we are told by the Apostle, again, that it is “sown in weakness.” The poor dead frame cannot lay itself down in its last bed—friendly hands must place it there. Even so we were utter weakness towards all good. When we were the captives of sin, we could do nothing good, even as our Lord said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” We were incapable of even a good thought apart from Him. But “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” and now we know Him and the power of His Resurrection! God has given us the spirit of power and of love. Is it not written, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name”? What an amazing power is this! Now we “taste of the powers of the world to come” and we are “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

Faith girds us with a Divine power, for, “all things are possible to him that believes,” and each Believer can exclaim, without boasting, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me!” Is not this a marvelous change which the spiritual resurrection has worked upon us? Is it not a glorious thing that God’s strength should be perfect in our weakness? The great change mainly concerns another point. It is said of the body, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” Before this we were natural men and discerned not the things that are of the Spirit of God. We minded earthly things and were moved by carnal lusts after the things which are seen. But now, through Divine Grace, a spirit has been created in us which feeds on spiritual bread, lives for spiritual objects, is swayed by spiritual motives and rejoices in spiritual truths.

This change, from the natural to the spiritual, is such as only God Himself could have worked and yet we have experienced it. To God be the glory! So that by virtue of our rising in Christ we have received life and have become the subjects of a wondrous change—“old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In consequence of our receiving this life and undergoing this change, the things of the world and sin become a tomb to us. To a dead man a sepulcher is as good a dwelling as he can want. You may call it his bedchamber if you will, for he lies within it as unconscious as if he were sleeping. But the moment the dead man lives, he will not endure such a bedchamber! He calls it a dreary vault; a loathsome dungeon; an unbearable morgue and he must leave it at once!

So when you and I were natural men and had no spiritual life, the things of this life contented us. But it is far otherwise now. A merely outward religion was all that we desired—a dead form suited a dead soul. Judaism pleased those who were under its yoke in the very beginning of the Gospel. New moons and holy days and traditional ordinances and fasting and feasting were great things with those who forgot their resurrection with Christ! All those things make pretty furniture for a dead man’s chamber! But when the Eternal Life enters the soul, these outward ordinances are flung off—the living man tears off his grave clothes and demands such garments as are suitable for life!

So the Apostle in the chapter before our text tells us to let no man spoil us by the traditions of men and the inventions of a dead ritualism, for these things are not the portion of renewed and spiritual men. So, too, all merely carnal objects become as a grave to us, whether they are sinful pleasures or selfish gains. For the dead man, the shroud, the coffin and the vault are suitable enough—but make the corpse alive and he cannot rest in the coffin! He makes desperate struggles to break it up. See how, by main force, he dashes up the lid, tears off his bandages and leaps from the bier! So the man renewed by Grace cannot live in sin—it is a coffin to him—he cannot bear evil pleasures, they are as a shroud. He cries for liberty!

When resurrection comes, the man lifts up the soil above his grave and scatters monument and headstone, if these are raised above him. Some souls are buried under a mass of self-righteousness, like wealthy men on whom shrines of marble have been heaped. But all these the Believer shakes off! He must have them gone! He cannot bear these dead works. He cannot live otherwise than by faith—all other life is death to him. He must get out of his former state, for as a tomb is not a fit place for a living man, so when we are quickened by Grace, the things of sin and self and carnal sense become dreary catacombs to us where our soul feels buried and out of which we must arise. How can we that are raised out of the death of sin live any longer in sin?

And, now, Beloved, we are at this time wholly raised from the dead in a spiritual sense. Let us think of this, for our Lord did not have His head quickened while His feet remained in the sepulcher. He rose a perfect and entire Man, alive throughout. Even so have we been renewed in every part. We have received, though it is but in its infancy, a perfect spiritual life—we are perfect in Christ Jesus. In our inner man our eyes are opened, our ears are awakened, our hands are active, our feet are nimble—our every faculty is there, though as yet immature and needing development and having the old dead nature to contend with. Moreover and best of all, we are so raised that we shall die no more! Oh, tell me no more the dreary tale that a man who has received the Divine Life may yet lose Grace and perish!

With our Bibles in our hands we know better. “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him” and, therefore, He that has received Christ’s life in him shall never die. Has He not said, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”? This life which He has given us shall be in us, “a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” He has said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” On the day of our quickening we bid farewell to spiritual death and to the sepulcher where we slept under sin’s dominion!

Farewell, you deadly love of sin! We have done with you! Farewell, dead world, corrupt world! We have done with you! Christ has raised us. Christ has given us eternal life! We forsake forever the dreary abodes of death and seek the heavenly places. Our Jesus lives and because He lives we shall live also, world without end! Thus I have tried to work out the metaphor of resurrection, by which our spiritual renewal is so well set forth.

II. We are urged by the Apostle to use the life which we have received and so, secondly, LET US EXERCISE THE NEW LIFE IN SUITABLE PURSUITS. “If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” Let your actions be agreeable to your new life. First, then, let us leave the sepulcher. If we are quickened, our first act should be to leave the region of death. Let us quit the vault of a merely outward religion and let us worship God in spirit and in truth. Let us have done with priestcraft and all the black business of spiritual undertaking and let the dead bury their dead—we will have none of it! Let us have done with outward forms and rites and ceremonies, which are not of Christ’s ordaining and let us know nothing except Christ Crucified, for that which is not of the living Lord is a mere piece of funeral pomp, fit for the cemeteries of formalists whose whole religion is a shoveling in of dust on coffin lids. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”

Let us also quit the vault of carnal enjoyments where men seek to satisfy themselves with provision for the flesh. Let us not live by the sight of the eyes, nor by the hearing of the ears. Let us not live for the amassing of wealth, or the gaining of fame, for these ought to be as dead things to the man who is risen in Christ. Let us not live for the world which we see, nor after the fashion of men to whom this life is everything. Let us live as those that have come out of the world and who, though they are in it, are no more of it. Let us be unmindful of the country from where we came out and leave it, as Abraham did, as though there were no such country, henceforth dwelling with our God, sojourners with Him, seeking “a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” As Jesus Christ left behind Him all the abodes of death, let us do the same.

And, then, let us hasten to forget every evil, even as our Lord hastened to leave the tomb. How little a time, after all, did He sojourn among the dead! He must lie in the heart of the earth three days, but He made them as short as possible, so that it is difficult to make out the three days at all. They were there, for there were fragments of each period, but surely never were three days so short as Jesus made them! He cut them short in righteousness and being loosed from the pains of death, He rose early, at the very break of day! At the first instant that it was possible for Him to get away from the sepulcher, consistent with the Scriptures, He left the napkin and the grave clothes and stood in the garden, waiting to salute His disciples!

So let it be with us! There should be no lingering, no loitering, no hankering after the world—no clinging to its vanities, no making provision for the flesh. Up in the morning early, oh you who are spiritually quickened! Up in the morning early from your ease, your carnal pleasure, your love of wealth and self and away out from the dark vault into a congenial sphere of action—“If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.”

To pursue the analogy—when our Lord had left the tomb thus early, He spent a season on earth among His disciples and we are to pass the time of our sojourning here on earth as His was passed—in holy service. Our Lord reckoned that He was on the move from earth as soon as He rose. If you remember, He said, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father.” He did not say, “I shall ascend,” as though He looked at it as a future event, but He said, “I ascend,” as if it were so quickly to be done that it was already doing. Forty days He stayed, for He had 40 days’ work to do—but He looked upon Himself as already going up into Heaven. He had done with the world. He had done with the grave and now He said, “I ascend to My Father and your Father.”

We also have our 40 days to tarry here—the period may be longer or shorter as the Providence of God ordains—but it will soon be over and the time of our departure will come. Let us spend our risen life on earth as Jesus spent His—in a greater seclusion from the world and in greater nearness to Heaven than ever. Our Lord occupied Himself much in testimony—manifesting Himself—as we have already seen, in many ways to His friends and followers. Let us also manifest the fruits of our risen life and bear testimony to the power of God! Let all men see that we are risen! So live that there can be no more doubt about your spiritual resurrection than there was about Christ’s literal Resurrection. Do not publish to the world your own virtues that you may be honored among them. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”

Put your possession of the new life beyond question so that when you have gone Home your friends and acquaintances may say—“He was a living child of God, for we felt the power of his life. He was a changed man, for we saw the renewing.” Jesus spent His risen life, also, in comforting His saints. He said, “Peace be unto you.” He spoke to one and another, to poor Peter who denied Him and to all the assembled company, cheering them and preparing them for their future career. He spent those 40 days in setting everything in order in His kingdom, arranging as to what should be when He should be taken up and leaving His last commission to His followers was that they should “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Beloved, let us also spend the time of our sojourning here in the fear of God, worshipping Him, serving Him, glorifying Him, endeavoring to set everything in order for the extension of our Master’s Kingdom, for the comforting of His saints, for the accomplishment of His sacred purposes.

And now I have led you up so far, I want to go further and rise higher. May the Lord help us! Let our minds ascend to Heaven in Christ. Even while our bodies are here we are to be drawn upward with Christ— attracted to Him so that we can say, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Our text says, “Seek those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God.” What is this but rising to heavenly pursuits? Jesus has gone up— let us go up with Him! As for these bodies, we cannot as yet ascend, for they are not fit to inherit the Kingdom of God—yet let our thoughts and hearts mount up and build a happy rest on high! Let not a stray thought ascend like one lone bird which sings and mounts the sky, but let our whole mind, soul, spirit, heart arise as when doves fly as a cloud!

Let us be practical, too, and in very deed seek the things that are above—seek them because we feel we need them. Seek them because we greatly prize them. Seek them because we hope to gain them for a man will not heartily seek for that which he has no hope of obtaining. The things which are above, which we are even now to seek, are such as these—let us seek heavenly communion, for we are no more numbered with the congregation of the dead, but we have fellowship in Christ’s Resurrection and with all the risen ones. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” and, “our conversation is in Heaven.” Let us seek to walk with the living God and to know the fellowship of the Spirit. Let us seek heavenly Graces, for “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” Let us seek more faith, more love, more patience, more zeal—let us labor after greater charity, greater brotherly kindness, greater humbleness of spirit.

Let us labor after likeness to Christ, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Seek to bear the image of the heavenly and to wear those jewels which adorn heavenly spirits. Seek also heavenly objectives. Aim at the Glory of God in everything. You have to labor and toil in this world for you are yet in the body—take care to use worldly things to God’s Glory. Exercise your privileges and fulfill your duties as men and as Englishmen, as before God, not minding the judgment of men. Wherein you mingle with the sons of men, take heed that you descend not to their level, nor act from their motives. You are not to seek your own selfish ends or the aggrandizement of a party, but to promote the general good and the interests of truth, righteousness, peace and purity. Sanctify everything by the love of God and your neighbor. Seek no party ends, but things which are pure and honest and of good report.

Descend not to the falsehood, the trickery, the policy which are from beneath, but honestly, sincerely, righteously, always seek to live as those who are alive from the dead. “Seek those things which are above,” that is, heavenly joys. Oh seek to know on earth the peace of Heaven, the rest of Heaven, the victory of Heaven, the service of Heaven, the communion of Heaven, the holiness of Heaven! You may have foretastes of all these— seek after them! Seek, in a word, to be preparing for the Heaven which Christ is preparing for you. You are soon to dwell above—robe yourselves for the great festival. Your treasure is above, let your hearts be with it. All that you are to possess in eternity is above, where Christ is! Rise, then, and enjoy it! Let hope anticipate the joys which are reserved and so let us begin our Heaven here below.

If you, then, are risen with Christ, live according to your risen nature, for your life is hid with Christ in God. What a magnet to draw us towards Heaven should this fact be—that Christ sits at God’s right hand! Where should the wife’s thoughts be when her husband is away but with the absent and beloved one? You know, Brothers and Sisters, it is not otherwise with us—the objects of our affection are always followed by our thoughts. Let Jesus, then, be as a great loadstone, drawing our meditations and affections towards Himself. He is sitting, for His work is done, as it is written, “This Man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Let us rise and rest with Him! He is sitting on a Throne. Observe His majesty! Delight in His power and trust in His dominion.

He is sitting at the right hand of God in the place of honor and favor. This is a proof that we are beloved and favored of God, for our Representative has the choicest place, at God’s right hand! Let your hearts ascend and enjoy that love and favor with Him. Take wing, my thoughts, and fly away to Jesus! My Soul, have you not often said, “Woe’s me that I dwell in Meshach and tabernacle in the tents of Kedar! Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest”? Now, then, my Soul, here are wings for you! Jesus draws you upward! You have a right to be where Jesus is, for you are married to Him! Therefore let your thoughts abide with Him, rest in Him, delight in Him, rejoice in Him and yet again rejoice!

The sacred ladder is before us, Brothers and Sisters, let us climb it, until, by faith, we sit in the heavenlies with Him. May the Spirit of God bless these words to you.

III. Thirdly, inasmuch as we are risen with Christ, LET THE NEW LIFE DELIGHT ITSELF IN SUITABLE OBJECTS. This brings in the second verse—“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” “Set your affection.” These words do not quite express the meaning, though they are as near it as any one clause could well come. We might render it thus—“Have a relish for things above” or, “Study industriously things above” or, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” That which is proper enough for a dead man is quite unsuitable for a risen one! Objects of desire which might suit us when we were sinners are not legitimate nor worthy objects for us when we are made saints. As we are quickened, we must exercise life and, as we have ascended, we must love higher things than those of earth.

What are these “things above” which we should set our affection upon? I ask you, now, to lift your eyes above yonder clouds and this lower firmament to the residence of God. What do you see there? First, there is God Himself. Make Him the subject of your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, your love. “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Call Him, “God my exceeding joy.” Let nothing come between you and your heavenly Father! What is all the world if you have not God and when you once have God, what matters it though all the world is gone? God is all things and when you can say, “God is mine,” you are richer than Croesus. O to say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You”!

O to love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength—that is what the Law required—but it is what the Gospel enables us to render. What do I see next? I see Jesus, who is God, but yet is truly Man. Need I press upon you, Beloved, to set your love upon the Well-Beloved? Has He not won your heart and does He not hold it, now, as under a mighty spell? I know you love Him! Fix your mind on Him, then. Often meditate upon His Divine Person, His perfect work, His mediatorial Glory, His second coming, His glorious reign, His love for you, your own security in Him, your union with Him! Oh let these sweet thoughts possess your breasts, fill your mouths and influence your lives. Let the morning break with thoughts of Christ and let your last thought at night be sweetened with His Presence. Set your affection upon Him who has set His affection upon you!

But what do I see above next? I see the new Jerusalem which is the mother of us all! I see the Church of Christ triumphant in Heaven, with which the Church militant is one. We do not realize enough the fact that we are come unto the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven. Love all the saints, but do not forget the saints above! Have fellowship with them, for we make but one communion. Remember those—

*“Who once were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears,  
Who wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins and doubts and fears.”*

Speak with the brave ones who have won their crowns, the heroes who have fought a good fight and now rest from their labors, waving the palm. Let your hearts be often among the perfected, with whom you are to spend eternity.

And what else is there above that our hearts should love but Heaven itself? It is the place of holiness! Let us so love it that we begin to be holy here. It is the place of rest—let us so delight in it that by faith we enter into that rest! O my Brothers and Sisters, you have vast estates which you have never seen—and I think if I had an estate on earth which was soon to be mine, I would wish to take a peep over the hedge now and then. If I could not take possession, I should like to see what I had in reversion. I would make an excuse to pass that way and say to any who were with me, “That estate is going to be mine before long.”

In your present poverty console yourselves with the many mansions. In your sickness delight much in the land where the inhabitants shall no more say, “I am sick.” In the midst of depression of spirit comfort your heart with the prospect of unmixed felicity—

*“No more fatigue, no more distress,  
Nor sin nor death shall reach the place!  
No groans to mingle with the songs  
Which warble from immortal tongues!”*

What? Are you fettered to earth? Can you not project yourself into the future? The stream of death is narrow—cannot your imagination and your faith leap over the brook to stand on the other shore awhile and cry, “All is mine and mine forever! Where Jesus is there shall I be! Where Jesus sits there shall I rest—

*‘Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in’”?*  
“Set your affection on things above.”

Oh to get away at this present time from these dull cares which, like a fog, envelope us! Even we that are Christ’s servants and live in His court, at times, feel weary and droop as if His service were hard. He never means it to be a bondage and it is our fault if we make it so. Martha’s service is due, but she is not called to be cumbered with much serving—that is her own arrangement! Let us serve abundantly and yet sit with Mary at the Master’s feet. You who are in business and mix with the world by the necessity of your callings must find it difficult to keep quite clear of the dragging down influences of this poor world—it will hamper you if it can. You are like a bird which is always in danger when it alights on the earth. There are twigs and traps and nets and guns and a poor bird is never safe except upon the wing and up aloft. Yet birds must come down to feed and they do well to gather their meal in haste and take to their wings again.

When we come down among men we must speedily be up again. When you have to mix with the world and see its sin and evil, yet take heed that you do not light on the ground without your Father. And then, as soon as ever you have picked up your barley, rise again—away, away, for this is not your rest! You are like Noah’s dove flying over the waste of waters— there is no rest for the sole of your feet but on the ark with Jesus! On this Resurrection Day fence out the world! Let us chase away the wild boar of the woods and let the vines bloom and the tender grapes give forth their good smell and let the Beloved come and walk in the garden of our souls while we delight ourselves in Him and in His heavenly gifts.

Let us not carry our burden of things below on this holy day, but let us keep it as a Sabbath unto the Lord! On the Sabbath we are no more to work with our minds than with our hands. Cares and anxieties of an earthly kind defile the day of sacred rest. The essence of Sabbathbreaking lies in worry and murmuring and unbelief with which too many are filled. Put these away, Beloved, for we are risen with Christ and it is not right that we should wander among the tombs! No, rather let us sing unto the Lord a new song and praise Him with our whole soul.

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÷Col 3.4

CHRIST OUR LIFE—SOON TO APPEAR

NO. 617

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 26, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you, also, appear with Him in glory.”***Col 3:4***.**

MY discourse on Sunday mornings is very frequently the gathering up of the thoughts and experiences of the week—a handful of barley which I have gleaned among the sheaves. But I could not thrust upon you, this morning, the poverty-stricken productions of my own insufferable dullness of brain, weariness of heart and sickness of spirit during this week, for this were a sure method of making you partakers of my misery. I have wandered through a wilderness, but I will not scatter handfuls of the hot sand among you. I have traversed the valley of the shadow of death, but I will not repeat the howling of Apollyon.

This day of rest is appointed for a far better purpose. Scarcely knowing how to fulfill the appointed service of this morning, I sit down and remember the ancient minstrel, who, when the genius of song had for a time departed from him, was nevertheless called upon to discourse sweet music. What could he do but play his fingers among the strings of his harp and begin some old accustomed strain? His fingers and his lips moved at first mechanically. The first few stanzas dropped from him from mere force of habit and fell like stones without life or power. But by and by he struck a string which woke the echoes of his soul—a note fell on his heart like a blazing torch and the smoldering fire within his soul suddenly flamed up. The Heaven-born muse was with him and he sang as in his better times.

So may it be my happy lot this morning—to place my fingers on the strings which know so well the name of Jesus—and begin to discourse upon a theme which so constantly has made these walls ring! Although at first insipid periods may try your patient ears, yet shall they nevertheless lead to something that may kindle in you hope and joy and love, if not rapture and delight! O for the wings of eagles to bear our souls upward towards the Throne of our God! Already my heart warms with the expectation of a blessing!

Does the earth feel the rising of the sun before the first bright beams gild the east? Are there not sharp-witted birds which know within themselves that the sunbeams are on the road and therefore begin right joyously to wake up their fellows to tell them that the morning comes leaping over the hills? Certain hopeful, joyful thoughts have entered within our heart—prophetic of the Comforter’s Divine appearing—to make glad our souls. Does not the whole earth prophecy the coming of the happy days of spring? There are certain little bulbs that swell, and flowers that peep

from under the black mold and say, “We know what others do not know, that the summer’s coming, coming very soon.”

And surely there are rising hopes within us this morning which show their golden flowers above our heaviness and assure us with joyful accents that Christ is coming to cheer our hearts yet again! Believer, you shall once again behold His comfortable Presence! You shall no longer cry unto Him out of the depths, but your soul shall lean upon His arm and drink deep of His love! Beloved, I proceed in the hope that the gracious Lord will favor His most unworthy servant and in His mercy fulfill our best expectations.

Our text is a very simple one and bears upon its surface four thoughts. First, that Christ is our life. That, secondly, Christ is hidden and so is our life. That thirdly, Christ will one day appear. And, fourthly, that when He appears, we, also, shall appear with Him in glory.

I. The first most precious and experimental doctrine lies in these words, “CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE.” We hardly realize that we are reading in Colossians when we meet with this marvelously rich expression. It is so like John’s way of talking.

See his opening words in his Gospel, “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” Remember how he reports the words at Lazarus’ tomb, “I am the resurrection and the life.” How familiarly he speaks of the Lord Jesus under the same Character in his first Epistle—“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. For the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.”

How closely John cleaves to Jesus! He does not say, as the preacher of this morning will—Christ is the food of our life and the joy of our life and the object of our life and so on. No, but “Christ is our life.” I think that Peter or James would have said, “He is the strength or guide of our life,” but John must put his head right on the Savior’s bosom—he cannot talk at a distance, or whisper from a second seat—his head must go sweetly down upon the Savior’s heaving bosom.

He must feel himself in the closest, nearest possible contact with his Lord. And so he puts it, “The life was manifested,” getting to the very pith and marrow of it at once. Paul has somewhat of the same loving spirit, and if not entitled to be called, “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” the angel might well have addressed him as he did Daniel, “O man, greatly beloved.” Therefore, you see, he leaps at once into the depths of the Truth of God and delights to dive in it. Whereas others, like the Israelites, stand outside the bound which surrounds the mount, he, like Moses, enters into the place where God is and beholds the excellent glory.

We, I fear, must compass this holy Truth round about before we can fully enter into it. Blessed is it to wait at the doors of such a Truth, though far better to enter in. Let it be understood that it is not natural but spiritual life of which the text treats and then we shall not mislead the ignorant.

1. Christ is the source of our life. “For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will.” Our Lord’s own words are—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears My Word and believes on Him that sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that hear shall live.”

Four verilies, as if to show the importance of the Truth here taught to us. We are dead in sin. That same voice which brought Lazarus out of the tomb brings us out of our grave of sin. We hear the Word of God and we live according to the promise—“Awake you that sleep and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light” (Eph 5:14). Jesus is our Alpha, as well as our Omega—He is the Author of our faith, as well as its Finisher. We should have been to this day dead in trespasses and sins if it had not been said, “And you has He quickened.” It is by His life that we live. He gives us the living water which is in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

2. Christ is the Substance of our spiritual life. What is life? The physician cannot discover it. The anatomist hunts in vain for it through flesh and nerve and brain. Be quick, Sir, with that scalpel of yours! “Life’s just departed,” men say. Cut quick to the heart and see if you cannot find, at least, some lingering footprint of the departed thing called life. Subtle anatomist, what have you found? Look at that brain—what can you see there but a certain quantity of matter strangely fashioned? Can you discover what is life?

It is true that somewhere in that brain and in that spinal cord it dwells and that heart with its perpetual pumping and heaving has something or other to do with it—but where is the substance, the real substance of the thing called life? Ariel’s wings cannot pursue it—it is too subtle. Thought knows it but cannot grasp it—knows it from its being like itself, but cannot give a picture of it—nor represent what it is. In the new nature of the Christian there is much mystery, but there is none as to what is its life! If you could cut into the center of the renewed heart you would find sure footprints of Divine life, for you would find love to Jesus.

No, you would find Christ Himself there! If you walk in search of the springs of the sea of the new nature, you will find the Lord Jesus at the fount of all. “All my springs are in You,” said David. Christ creates the lifethrobs of the Believer’s soul! He sends the life-floods through the man according to His own will! If you could penetrate the brain of the Believer you would find Christ to be the central thought moving every other thought and causing every other thought to take root and grow out of itself! You would find Christ to be the true Substance of the inner life of the spiritual nature of every soul quickened by the breath of Heaven’s life.

3. Christ is the Sustenance of our life. What can the Christian feed upon but Jesus’ flesh and blood? As to his natural life he needs bread, but as to his spiritual life, of which, alone, we are now speaking, he has learned that, “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.” “This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eats of this

bread, he shall live forever—and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

We cannot live on the sand of the wilderness. We want the manna which drops from on high. Our skin bottles of creature confidence cannot yield us a drop of moisture—we drink of the Rock which follows us and that rock is Christ. O wayworn Pilgrims in this wilderness of sin! You never get a morsel, much less a meal to satisfy the craving hunger of your spirits except you find it in Christ Jesus! When you feed on Him your soul can sing, “He has satisfied my mouth with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” But if you have Him not, your bursting wine vat and your well-filled barn can give you no sort of satisfaction—rather you will lament over them in the words of Wisdom—“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!”

O how true are Jesus’ own Words, “For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood dwells in Me and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me.” Christ is the solace of our life! Noah’s ark had but one window and we must not expect more. Jesus is the only window which lets light into the Christian’s spirit when he is under sharp affliction. Kirke White’s picture of his midnight voyage, when one star alone of all the train could guide the mariner’s foundering boat to the port of peace, is a faint but truthful representation of the Christian’s life in its hour of peril.

Paul says that during his disastrous voyage, “neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on them and all hope that they should be saved was taken away, but then, just then, the Angel of God stood at his side.” And even so will the Lord Jesus appear to His saints in their extremities and be their joy and safety. And, Brethren, if Christ appears, what matters it where we are?—

*“Midst darkest shades if He appears  
My dawning is begun.  
He is my soul’s bright morning star,  
And He my rising sun.”*

Do not talk of poverty! Our tents are the curtains of Solomon and not the smoke-dried skins of Kedar when Christ is present! Speak not of need! There are all manner of precious fruits laid up for my Beloved when He comes into my cot. Speak not of sickness! My soul is no longer sick except it is of love, but full of holy health when once the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing beneath His wings! Christ is the very soul of my soul’s life. His loving kindness is better than life! There is nothing in life worth living for but Christ. “Whom have I in Heaven but You and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You!”

The rest is mere skim milk and curds fit to be given to the swine, but Christ is the cream. All else is but the husk and bran and coarse gritty meal. The Lord Jesus is the pure flour. All that remains is the chaff—fan it and the wind shall carry it away, or the fire shall burn it and little shall be the loss! Christ is the golden grain, the only thing worth having. Life’s true life, the true heart’s blood, the innermost fount of life is in Jesus. To the true Christian, Christ is the object of his life. As speeds the ship towards the port, so hastens the Believer towards the haven of his Savior’s bosom. As flies the arrow to its goal, so flies the Christian towards the perfecting of his fellowship with Christ Jesus. As the soldier fights for his captain and is crowned in his captain’s victory, so the Believer contends for Christ and gets his triumph out of the triumphs of his Master.

“For him to live is Christ”—at least it is this he seeks after and counts that all life apart from this is merely death in another form. That wicked flesh of his. That cumbrous clay. Those many temptations. That Satanic trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil—all these mar his outward actions. But if he could be what he would be, he would stand like the bullock at Christ’s altar to be slaughtered, or march forward like a bullock in Christ’s furrow to plough the blood-bought field. He desires that he may not have a hair of his head unconsecrated, nor heave one breath which is not for his Savior, nor speak one word which is not for the glory of his Lord!

His heart’s ambition is to live so long as he can better glorify Christ on earth than in Heaven and to be taken up when it shall be better for him and more honorable for his Master that he should be with Jesus where He is. As the river seeks the sea, so, Jesus, I seek You! O let me find You and melt my life into Yours forever! It follows from all this that Christ is the Exemplar of our life. A Christian lays the life of Christ before him as the schoolboy puts his copy at the top of the page and he tries to draw each line, down-stroke and up-stroke, according to the handwriting of Christ Jesus.

He has the portrait of Christ before him as the artist has in his studio his Greek sculptures, busts and torsos. He knows that there is all the true anatomy of virtue in Christ. If he wants to study life, he studies from Christ, or, if he would closely learn the beauties of the antique, he studies from the Savior, for Christ is ancient and modern, antique and living, too! Therefore God’s artists in their life-sculpture keep to the Savior and count that if they imitate every vein and fetch out every muscle of their great Copy, they shall then have produced the perfection of manhood. I would give nothing for your religion if you do not seek to be like Christ! Where there is the same life within, there will, there must be, to a great extent, the same developments without.

I have heard it said and I think I have sometimes noticed it, that husbands and wives who are truly knit together in near and dear conjugal affection, grow somewhat like each other in expression, if not in feature. This I well know, that if the heart is truly wedded to the Lord Jesus and lives in near fellowship with Him, it must grow like He is. Grace is the light, our loving heart is the sensitive plate, Jesus is the Person who fills the lens of our soul and soon a heavenly photograph of His Character is produced. There will be a similarity of spirit, temper, motive and action. It will not be manifest merely in great things but in little matters, too, for even our speech will betray us.

Thus you see I have only been wading along the banks, or at best conducting you up to the knees in the gently flowing stream of my text. Experience must lead you further, for there is a great deep here. Paul could perceive it, for he does not say as I have been saving, “Jesus is the Source of our life, the Substance of our life, the Solace of our life, the Object of

our life, the Exemplar of our life.” Paul says, “Christ is our life,” and so He is, indeed.

Just as we have a natural life of which we know so little, so we have a spiritual life which is more mysterious by far and of that we know beyond its effects and operations little more than this—that Christ is that life. That when we get Christ we have eternal life. That if we have life it is only because we have Christ in us, the hope of Glory. I must pause a minute here to say that what is true concerning our spiritual life, now, is equally true of our spiritual life in Heaven. Different as are the circumstances of the life in Heaven and the life on earth, yet as to real essence there is only one life in both places. Saints in Heaven live by precisely the same life which makes them live here.

Spiritual life in the kingdom of Grace and in the kingdom of Glory is the same—only here it is uneducated spiritual life—there it is educated and trained. Here it is undeveloped, it is the babe, the child—there it is developed, manifested, perfected. But in very deed the life is precisely the same. Saints need not to be born again after once being regenerate. You who have been born again have now within you the life which will last on throughout eternity! You have the very same vital spark of heavenly flame which will burn in Glory, world without end. It will be no digression if we here remark that as we have eternal life in having Christ, this marks our dignity.

“Christ our life!” Why, this cannot be said of princes or kings! What is their life? Talk of blue blood and pedigree, and so on—here is something more, here is God’s own Son—our life! You cannot say this of angels. Bright spirits, your songs are sweet and your lives are happy, but Christ is not your life! No, this cannot be asserted of archangels. Gabriel! You may bend yourself before God’s Throne and worship Him in praises too high for me, but you cannot boast what I can surely claim—that Christ is my life!

Even those mysterious presences—angels of whom we read in Ezekiel and Revelation called the four living creatures—though they seem to bear up the moving throne of Deity, creatures who appear to be an embodiment of Divine power and glory—yet even of these it is not written that Christ is their life! Herein men—redeemed, elect, favored men rise to a supernatural light, for they can say what no spirits but those redeemed by blood may venture to assert—“Christ is our life.” Does not this account for Christian holiness? How can a man live in sin if Christ is his life? Jesus dwells in him and he continues in sin? Impossible! Can he sin without his life? He must do so if he sins, because Christ cannot sin and Christ is his life.

Why, if I see the saint ever so self-denying, ever so zealous, ever so earnest, ever so like his Lord, it is no wonder now, when I understand that Christ is his life! See how secure the Christian is. No dagger can reach his life, for it is hidden beyond the skies. No temptation, no hellish blast, no exhalation from the Stygian pits of temptation can ever, with burning fever or chill consumption, waste the life of the Christian spiritually. No, it is hid with Christ! It is Christ and unless Christ dies, the Christian’s life dies not. Oh how safe, how honored, how happy is the Christian!

But we may not linger longer, time warns us to proceed. There is much more than ever we shall be able to bring out. Let down your buckets—here is a deep well! I hope you have something to draw with—and you that have life within have. You that have not may look down the well and see the darkness, or the reflection of the water—but you cannot reach the cooling flood. It is only you who can draw who can know the excellence of this living water. I pray the Lord help you to drink to the full and draw again! There is no fear of ever draining the inexhaustible fullness of this deep Truth of God.

II. Now, as our Lord Jesus has not yet appeared in His Glory, OUR LIFE IS THEREFORE HIDDEN. “The earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God,” but as yet they are unknown and unmanifested. The major part of the Believer’s life is not seen at all and never can be by the unspiritual eye. Where is Christ? To the worldling at the present moment there is no such Person as Christ. He says, “I cannot see Him, touch Him, hear Him. He is beyond all cognizance of my senses. I do not believe in Him.” Just such is spiritual life to the unbeliever.

You must not expect, because you are a Christian, that unbelievers will begin to admire you and say, “What a mystery! This man has a new life in him! What an admirable thing, what a desirable possession! We wish we partook of the same.” Nothing of the kind. They do not know that you have such a life at all. They can see your outward actions, but your inward life is quite out of reach of their observation.

Christ is in Heaven today. He is full of joy. But the world does not know His joy. No worldly heart is boasting and rejoicing because Christ is glad in Heaven. Christ today is pleading before the Father’s Throne, but the world does not see Christ’s engagements. Christ’s occupations are all hidden from carnal eyes. Christ at this present moment reigns and has power in Heaven and earth and Hell—but what does the worldly man see of it? Jesus has fellowship with all His saints everywhere—but what does the ungodly discern? I might stand and preach until midnight concerning my Lord, but all that men who are unconverted would gain would be to hear what I have to tell and then to say, “Perhaps it is true.” But they could not possibly discern it—the thing is beyond the cognizance of sense.

So is our spiritual life. Beloved, you may reign over sin, but the sinner does not comprehend your being a king. You may officiate as a priest before God, but the ungodly man does not perceive your priesthood and your worship. Do not expect him to do so! Your labor is lost if you try by any way to introduce him to these mysteries except by the same door through which you came yourself. I never try to teach a horse astronomy—and to teach an unconverted man spiritual experience would be a folly of the same sort. The man who knows nothing of our inner life takes up “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and he says, “Yes, it is a very wonderful allegory.”

It is, Sir, but unrenewed minds know nothing about it. When we have sometimes read explanations of the Pilgrim’s Progress, we could not but detect that the writer of the explanation had need to have had it explained to himself. He could describe the shell, but the kernel of the nut was far

beyond his reach! He had not learned to crack the shell and to feed upon the meat. Now it must be so, it must be so, if Christ is our life. Christ has gone away and cannot be seen. It must be so that the greater proportion of the spiritual life must be forever a secret to all but spiritual men.

But there is a part which men do see and that I may liken to Christ when He was on earth—Christ seen of men and angels. What did the world do with Christ as soon as they saw Him? Set Him in the chair of State and fall down and worship His absolute perfection? No, not they— “He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Outside of the camp was His place! Cross-bearing was for Him His occupation, not of one day, but of every day. Did the world yield Him solace and rest?

Foxes, you have your holes! Birds of the air, you have your nests! But the Son of Man had no where to lay His head! Earth could afford Him no bed, no house, no shelter! At last it cast Him out for death and crucified Him and then would have denied Him a tomb if one of His disciples had not begged His body! Such you must expect to be the lot of the part of your spiritual life which men can see. As soon as they see it to be spiritual life, they will treat it as they treated the Savior.

They will despise it. “Sure!” they say, “pretty fancies, fine airs, nice ideas.” You expect them to give you comfort, do you? Worldlings to give you comfort? Do you think that Christ will have anywhere to lay His head in this world today any more than He had 1800 years ago? You go about to find what God gives the foxes and the birds—but what He never meant to give to you in this world—a place to lay your head. Your place to lay your head is up yonder on your Savior’s bosom, but not here. You dream that men will admire you, that the more holy you are and the more Christlike you are, the more peaceable people will be towards you. My dear Friends, you do not know what you are thinking!

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?” I believe if we were more like Christ we should be much more loved by His friends and much more hated by His enemies. I do not believe the world would be half so lenient to the Church, today, if it were not that the Church has grown complacent to the world.

When any of us speak up boldly, mercenary motives are imputed to us! Our language is turned upside down and we are abhorred of men. We get smooth things, Brethren, because I am afraid we are too much like the false prophets who prophesied peace, peace, where there was no peace. Let us be true to our Master! Stand out and come out and be like He, and we must expect the same treatment which He had. And if we receive it we can only say, “This is what I expected.”—

*“ ‘Tis, no surprising thing  
That we should be unknown.  
The Jewish world knew not their king,  
God’s everlasting Son.”*

III. CHRIST WILL APPEAR. The text speaks of it as a fact to be taken for granted. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear.” It is not a matter of question in the Christian Church whether Christ will appear or not. Has not Christ appeared once? Yes, after a certain sort. I remember reading a quaint expression of some old Divine that the book of Revelation might quite as well be called an Obvelation, for it was rather a hiding than a revealing of things to come. So, when Jesus came it was hardly a revealing, it was a hiding of our Lord.

It is true that He was “manifest in the flesh,” but it is equally true that the flesh shrouded and concealed His Glory. The first manifestation was very partial—it was Christ seen through a glass—Christ in the mist of grief and the cloud of humiliation. Christ is yet to appear in the strong sense of the word “appearing.” He is to come out and shine forth. He is to leave the robes of scorn and shame behind and to come in the Glory of the Father and all His holy angels with Him. This is the constant teaching of the Word of God and the constant hope of the Church, that Christ will appear.

A thousand questions at once suggest themselves— How will Christ appear? When will Christ appear? Where will Christ appear? And so on. What God answers we may enquire, but some of our questions are mere impertinence. How will Christ appear? I believe Christ will appear in Person. Whenever I think of the Second Coming, I never can tolerate the idea of a spiritual coming. That always seems to me to be the most transparent folly that can possibly be put together, because Christ cannot come spiritually—He is always here! “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Christ’s spiritual coming never can be that which is spoken of in Scripture, as the day of our release. I sometimes say to Brethren, “Do you think if Christ were to come spiritually now, we should observe the ordinances better?” “Yes, certainly.” “Do you think, for instance, the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper would be better attended to?” “Yes, no doubt it would.” Yes, but then this proves that this is not the coming which the Bible speaks of, because it is expressly said of the Lord’s Supper that we are to do it in remembrance of Him, till He comes. A spiritual coming would make us do it more zealously.

There must be another form of coming which would justify our giving up the Supper altogether and that must be of a personal character—for then, and then only, might the Supper properly cease. We shall not need to have a supper to remind us of the Person, when the Person Himself shall be present in our midst reigning and triumphant in His Church! We believe in a Personal reign and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But how will He come? He will doubtless come with great splendor. The angels of God shall be His attendants. We gather from Scripture that He will come to reign in the midst of His people. That the house of Israel will acknowledge Him as King—yes, that all nations shall bow down before Him and kings shall pay Him homage.

None shall be able to stand against Him. “Those that pierced Him shall wail because of Him.” He will come to discern between the righteous and the wicked, to separate the goats from the sheep. He will come graciously to adjudge His people their reward according to their works. He will give to those who have been faithful over a few things to be rulers over many things. And those who have been faithful over many things shall be rulers over many cities. He will come to discern between the works of His people—such as are only wood, hay and stubble will be consumed. Such as are gold and silver and precious stones will stand the fire.

He will come to condemn the wicked to eternal punishment and to take His people up to their everlasting mansions in the skies. We look for such a coming and without entering into minute details, drawing charts and painting pictures, we are content to believe that He is coming in His Glory to show Himself to be what He always was—King of kings and Lord of lords, God over all, blessed forever! He is to be adored and worshipped and no more to be despised and rejected of men.

When will He come? That is a question which Unbelief asks with a start. Faith replies, “It is not for you to know the times and seasons. Of that day and of that hour no man knows.” Some simpleton says, “But we may know the week, month, or year.” Do not trifle with God’s Word and make a fool of yourself because you must know that the expression means that you do not know anything about the time at all and never will. Christ will come in a time when we look not for Him. Perhaps when the world and the Church are most asleep. When the wise and the foolish virgins have, alike, fallen into a deep slumber. When the stewards shall begin to beat their fellow servants and to drink and to be drunk. At midnight, or perhaps not till cock-crowing, He will come like a thief and the house shall be suddenly broken up.

But come He will, and that is enough for you and for me to know. And when He comes we shall appear, for as He shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory.

IV. **The fourth thought is THAT WHEN CHRIST SHALL APPEAR, WE ALSO SHALL APPEAR. Do you ever feel like those lions in the Zoological Gardens, restlessly walking up and down before the bars of their cage and seeming to feel that they were never meant to be confined within those narrow limits? Sometimes they are for thrusting their heads through the bars and then for dashing back and tearing the back of their dungeon, or for rending up the pavement beneath them as if they yearned for liberty. Do you ever feel like that?   
Does your soul ever want to get free from her cage? Here is an iron bar of sin, of doubt, and there is another iron bar of mistrust and infirmity. Oh, if you could tear them away, could get rid of them all you would do something for Christ—you would be like Christ! Oh, if you could but by some means or other burst the bands of this captivity! But you cannot and therefore you feel uneasy. You may have seen an eagle with a chain upon its foot, standing on a rock—poor unhappy thing! It flaps its wings—looks up to the sun—wants to fly right straight ahead at it and stare the sun out of countenance—looks to the blue sky and seems as if it could sniff the blue beyond the dusky clouds and wants to be away.   
And so it tries its wings and dreams of mounting—but that chain, that cruel chain, remorselessly holds it down. Has not it often been so with you? You feel, “I am not meant to be what I am. I am sure I am not. I have a something in me which is adapted for something better and higher and I want to mount and soar—but that chain—that dragging chain of the body of sin and death keeps me down.”   
Now it is to such as you that this text comes and says to you, “Yes, your present state is not your soul’s true condition. You have a hidden life in you. That life of yours pants to get out of the bonds and fetters which control it and it shall be delivered soon, for Christ is coming! And when Christ shall appear *you* shall appear—the same appearance that belongs to Him belongs to you! He shall come and then your day of true happiness and joy and peace and everything that you are panting for and longing for shall certainly come.”   
I wonder whether the little oak inside the acorn—for there is a whole oak there and there are all the roots and all the boughs and everything inside that acorn—I wonder whether that little oak inside the acorn ever has any premonition of the summer weather that will float over it a hundred years from now and of the mists that will hang in autumn on its sere leaves and of the hundreds of acorns which itself will cast, every autumn, upon the earth, when it shall become in the forest a great tree?   
You and I are like that acorn! Inside of each of us are the germs of great things. There is the tree that we are to be—I mean there is the *spiritual* thing we are to be—both in body and soul! Even now within us and sometimes here below, in happy moments, we get some inklings of what we are to be. And then how we want to burst the shell, to get out of the acorn and to be the oak! Yes, but stop. Christ has not come, Christian, and you cannot get out of that till the time shall come for Jesus to appear. Then shall you appear with Him in glory.   
You will very soon perceive in your rainwater, certain ugly little things which swim and twist about in it, always trying, if they can, to reach the surface and breathe through one end of their bodies. What makes these little things so lively, those innumerable little things like very small tadpoles? Why are they so lively? Possibly they have an idea of what they are going to be. The day will come when all of a sudden there will come out of the case of the creature that you have had swimming about in your water, a long-legged thing with two bright gauze-like wings which will mount into the air and on a summer’s evening will dance in the sunlight!   
It is nothing more nor less than a gnat! You have, swimming there, a gnat in one of its earliest stages. You are just like that—you are an undeveloped being—you have not your wings yet and yet sometimes, in your activity for Christ, when the strong desires for something better are upon you, you leap in foretaste of the bliss to come! I do not know what I am to be, but I feel that there is a heart within me too big for these ribs to hold! I have an immortal spark which cannot have been intended to burn on this poor earth and then to go out. It must have been meant to burn on Heaven’s altar.   
Wait a bit and when Christ comes you will know what you are. We are in the chrysalis state now and those who are the liveliest worms among us grow more and more uneasy in that chrysalis state. Some are so frozen up in it that they forget the hereafter and appear content to remain a chrysalis forever. But others of us feel we would sooner not be than be what we now are forever. We feel as if we must burst our bonds and when that time of bursting shall come, when the chrysalis shall get its painted wings and mount to the land of flowers, then shall we be satisfied.   
The text tells us—“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear”—when He comes out in all His Glory—“we also shall appear with Him in glory.” If you would like these gracious promises drawn out into detail with regard to the body you may listen to just such words as these. “It is sown a soulish body, it is raised a Spiritual body. The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the earthy such are they, also, that are earthy. As is the heavenly such are they, also, that are heavenly.”   
Whatever Christ’s body is in Heaven, our body is to be like it. Whatever its glory and strength and power, our vile body is to be fashioned like unto His glorious body! As for our soul, whatever of absolute perfection—whatever of immortal joy Christ possesses, we are to possess that. And as for honor— whatever of esteem and love Christ may have from intelligent beings, we are to share in the same. And as for position before God—whatever Christ has—we are to stand where He stands.   
Are His enemies put to confusion? So are ours. Do all worlds discern His Glory? They shall discern ours, too. Is all dishonor wiped away from Him? So shall it be from us. Do they forget forever the shame and spitting, the Cross and the nails? So shall they in our case. Is it forever, “Gory! And honor! And power! And dominion! And bliss without end!”? So shall it be in our case! Let us comfort one another, therefore, with these words and look up out of our wormwood and our chrysalis state to that happier and better day when we shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is.   
All this has nothing to do with a great many of you. You will die but you will never rise like Christ. You will die and you will die—why did I say, “and you will die?” Why, because you will have to feel the Second Death, and that second death, mark you, is as much more horrifying than the first as the trumpet of the angel is more terrible than the voice of the preacher can be this morning!   
Oh, I would that Christ were your life, but you are dead and God will say of you one of these days as Abraham said of Sarah, “Bury the dead out of My sight,” and you must be put out of His sight as an obnoxious putrid thing. Oh that He would quicken you this day! “There is life,” says the hymn, “in a look at the Crucified One.” God help you to exercise one look at that Christ of whom I spoke and then you shall join with the rest of His people in saying, “Christ is our life.”   
May God bless these feeble words of mine and own them because of their weakness—the more to illustrate His own Grace and power, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.**

Adapted from ***The C.H. Spurgeon Collection***, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

÷Col 3.11

CHRIST IS ALL  
NO. 1006

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Christ is All in All.”***Col 3:11***.**

THE Apostle was arguing for holiness. He was earnestly contending against sin and for the maintenance of Christian graces, but he did not, as some do who would like to be thought preachers of the Gospel, resort to reasons inconsistent with the Gospel of Free Grace. He did not bring forward a single legal argument. He did not say, “This do, and you shall merit reward,” or, “This do not, and you shall cease to be the Beloved of the Lord.” He knew that he was writing to Believers who are not under the Law but under Grace, and he therefore used arguments fetched from Grace, and suitable to the character and condition of “the elect of God, holy and beloved.”

He fed the flame of their love with suitable fuel, and fanned their zeal with appropriate appliances. Observe in this chapter that he begins by reminding the saints of their having risen with Christ. If they, indeed, have risen with Him, he argues that they should leave the grave of iniquity and the grave clothes of their sins behind, and act as those who are endowed with that superior life which accounts sin to be death and corruption. He then goes on to declare that the Believer’s life is in Christ, “for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” He infers holiness from this, also.

Shall those who have Christ for their life defile themselves with guilt? Is it not inevitable that, if the Holy One of Israel is in them as their life, their life should be fraught with everything that is virtuous and good? And then he brings forward the third argument that in the Christian Church Christ is the only distinguishing mark. In the new birth we are created in the image of Jesus, the second Adam, and in consequence all the distinctions that appertain to the old creation are rendered valueless.

“There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is All, and in all”—the argument from this fact being that since the only abiding distinction in the new creation is Christ, we should take care that His image is most clearly stamped upon us so that we may not only confess with our tongues that we are Christians, but our conversation and our entire character shall bespeak us to be such. As you may recognize the Jew by his physiognomy, the Greek by his gracefulness, and the barbarian by his uncouthness—so should the Christian be known by his Christ-likeness—by the light, love, and life of Christ streaming forth from him.

This is the seal of God which is set upon the forehead of the faithful, and this is the mark of election which is in due season engraved on the right hand of all the elect. Now, as the only distinction which marks the Christian from other men, and the only essential distinction in the new world of Grace, is Christ, we are led to see beneath this fact a great underlying doctrine. In the realm of Grace, things are what they seem. Christ is apparently All, because he is actually All. The fact of a man’s possessing Christ is all in all in the Church, because in very deed Christ is All in All.

All that is real in the Christian—all that is holy, heavenly, pure, abiding, and saving—is of the Lord Jesus. This great granite fact lies at the basis of the whole Christian system, Christ is really and truly All in All in His Church, and in each individual member of it. We shall, this morning, in trying to open up this precious subject, by the help of the Divine Spirit, first, notice by whom this Truth of God is recognized. Secondly we shall consider what this Truth includes. Thirdly, what it involves, and fourthly, what it requires of us—for if you observe, the text is followed by a, “Therefore.” There is a conclusion logically drawn from it.

I. First, then, BY WHOM IS THIS TRUTH RECOGNIZED? Paul does not say that Christ is All in All to all men, but he tells us that there is a new creation in which the man is “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,” where all national and ceremonial distinctions cease, and Christ is All and in all. It is not to every man that Christ is All and in all. Alas, there are many in this world to whom Christ is nothing. He scarcely enters into their thoughts.

Some of the baser sort only use His name to curse by. And as to many others, if they have a religion, it is a proud presumption which excludes a savior. The creed of the self-righteous has no room in it for the sinner’s savior. The Justifier of the ungodly is nothing to them. The worldly, the frivolous, the unchaste, the licentious—these do not permit themselves to think of the Holy Redeemer. Perhaps some such are now present, and though they will hear about Him this morning, and of nothing else but Him, they will say, “what a weariness it is,” and be glad when the discourse is ended.

Jesus is a root out of a dry ground to multitudes—to them He has no form nor comeliness—and in Him they see no beauty that they should desire Him. Ah, what will they do when He is revealed in the glory of His power? They thought it nothing to them as they passed by His Cross, but they will not be able to despise Him as they stand convicted before His Throne. O you who make Jesus nothing, kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the Way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Without Christ, you are today without peace, and will be forever without hope!

Nothing remains for Christless souls at the last but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. I could well pause here, and say let us pray for those who are unbelievers, and so are living without a Savior, that they may not remain any longer in this state of condemnation.

There are others in this world to whom Christ is something, but not much. They are anxious to save themselves, but since they must confess some imperfections they use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight for their slight deficiencies. Their robe is almost long enough, and by adding a little fringe of the Redeemer’s Grace it becomes all they can wish. They say prayers. They go to Church to take the sacrament, to observe Good Friday—these are the main reliances of many a religionist—and then if the coach sticks a little in a deeper rut than usual they call in the help of the Lord Jesus, and hope that He will put His shoulder to the wheel.

They commonly say, “Well, we must do our best, then Christ will be our Savior, and God is very merciful.” They allow the blessed and all-sufficient work and sacrifice of the Savior to fill up their failures. And they imagine that they are extremely humble in allowing so much as that. Jesus is to them a stopgap, and nothing more. I know not whether the condition of such people is one whit more desirable than that of those to whom Jesus is nothing at all, for this is a vile contempt and despising of Christ, indeed—to think that He came to help you to save yourselves—to dream that He is a part Savior, and will divide the world and honor of salvation with the sinner.

Those who yoke the sinner and the Savior together as each doing a part rob Christ of all His Glory. And this is robbery, indeed, to pilfer from the bleeding Lamb of God the due reward of His agonies. “He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him.” In the work of salvation Jesus stands alone. Salvation is of the Lord. If Christ is not all to you—He is nothing to you. He will never go into partnership as a part Savior of men. If He is something He must be everything, and if He is not everything He is nothing to you.

There are many who, unconsciously to themselves, think Jesus Christ to be much, but yet they do not understand that He is All in All. I allude to many seeking souls, who say, “I would put my trust in Jesus this morning, but I do not feel as I ought.” I see—you think that there is at least a little of your feeling to be added to the Savior’s work before it can avail for you. “But I am not as penitent as I should be, and therefore I cannot rest in Jesus.” I see, your penitence is to add the top stone to the Savior’s yet unfinished work. Perhaps it is one of the hardest works in the world, so hard as to be impossible except to the Holy Spirit, Himself, to drive a man away from the idea that he is to do something, or to be something, in order to his own salvation.

Sinner, you are the emptiness, and Christ the Fullness! You are the filthiness, and He the Cleansing! You are nothing, and he is All in All. And the sooner you consent to this, the better. Have done with saying, “I would come to the Savior if this, and if that!” For this quibbling will delude, delay, and destroy you! Come as you are, just now, even at this moment—for Christ is not almost all—He is ALL IN ALL.

There are some, too, who think that Christ is all in some things, but they have not yet seen the full teaching of the text. For it says—“Christ is All, and in all.” He is all, “say they, in Justification. He it is that pardons all our sins and covers us with His righteousness. But as to our sanctification, surely, we are to effect that ourselves. And as to our final perseverance, it must depend wholly upon our own watchfulness. Are we not in jeopardy still? Are there not some points which depend upon our own virtue and goodness?”

Beloved, God forbid I should say a word against the most earnest watchfulness, against the most diligent endeavors, but I beseech you do not place them in a wrong position, or speak as though the ultimate salvation of the Believer were based upon such shifting sand. We are saved in Christ. We are complete in Him. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus— “And He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification,

and redemption.” Christ is ALL, not in my Justification only, but in my sanctification, too. He is ALL, not only in the first steps of my faith, but in the last.

“He is Alpha and Omega. He is the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord.” There is no point between the gates of Hell and the gates of Heaven where a Believer shall have to say, “Christ fails me here, and I must rely upon my own endeavors.” From the dunghill of our corruption up to the throne of our perfection there is no point left to chance, or set aside for us to supply. Our salvation has Christ to begin with, Christ to go on with, and Christ to finish with—and that in all points, at all times—for every man of woman born that ever shall be saved. There is no point in which the creature comes in to claim merit, or to bring strength, or to make up for that which was lacking. “Christ is all, and in all.”

The saints are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” He said, “it is finished,” and finished it is. He is not the Author of our faith only, but the Finisher of it, too. He is All in All, and man is nothing at all. This is a Truth of God which every Believer has recognized. There are a great many differences among Believers, but there can be no difference as to this essential point. Unhappily, the Christian Church has been divided into sections, but those divisions do not affect our agreement upon this one point, that Christ is All. It is no unkindness if I say that the man who does not accept this is no Christian, nor is it too wide a liberality to affirm that every man who is sound in heart upon this point is most certainly a Believer.

He who trusts alone in Christ, who submits to Him as his sole Teacher, King, and Savior is already a saved man. But he who gives not Christ the glory, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels— though he should have the gift of prophecy and all knowledge, and though he should have all faith—and could remove mountains. And though he should appear to have all virtue, yet he is no Christian if Christ is held in light esteem by him, or is anything less than All in All. For in the new creation this one thing stands as the mark of the newly created, that “Christ is All, and in all” to them, whatever He may be to others.

II. Having thus shown where this Truth is recognized, we pass on to notice WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES. It was the advice of an aged tutor to a young student not to take too magnificent a text. I have sounded that warning in my own ears this morning. This little text is yet one of the greatest in the whole Bible and I feel lost in its boundless expanse. It is like one of those rare gems which are little to look upon, and yet he who carries them bears the price of empires in his hand. It would not be within the compass of arithmetic to set down the value of this sapphire test.

I might as soon hope to carry the world in my hands as to grasp all that is contained in these few words. I cannot navigate so huge a sea—my skiff is too small—I can only coast along the shore. Who can compress “all things” into a sermon? I will warrant you that my discourse this morning will be more remarkable for its omissions than for what it contains, and I shall hope, indeed, that every Christian here will be remarking upon what I do not say. For then I shall have done much good in exciting meditations and reflections. If I were to try to tell you all the meaning of this boundless text, I should require all time and eternity, and even then all tongues, human and angelic, could not avail me to compass the whole. We will swim in this sea though we cannot fathom it, and feast at this table though we cannot reckon up its costliness.

1. According to the connection, Christ is All by way of national distinction, subject for glorying, and ground for custom. Observe, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,” in the new creation, but “Christ is All, and in all.” In the new world there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—barbarian simplicity and Greek cultivation are as nothing. I suppose as long as we are in the flesh we shall set some store by our nationality, and like Paul, shall somewhat glory that we were free born—but surely the less of this the better.

Within the gates of the Christian Church we are cosmopolitan, or rather we are citizens of the New Jerusalem only. As a man, I rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same holy joy which fills me when I remember that I am a Christian. When I meet another man who fears God, I do not want him to think me an Englishman, nor do I desire to regard him as an American, a Frenchman, or a Dutchman. We are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens.

If any man is a Christian and a foreigner after the flesh, he is yet in spirit ten thousand times more allied to me than if he were an Englishman and an unbeliever. Greatly is it to be deplored whenever the convulsions of nations drag Christian men into opposition to one another on the ground of politics. One part of the body of Christ cannot be at war with another. It is a shameful thing whenever we suffer our earthly nationality to dominate over our heavenly citizenship.

Queen Victoria and President Grant are well enough in their places, but King Jesus is Lord of all. We are above all things subjects of His Imperial Highness the Prince of Peace. Nobody comes into the Church as a Jew or a Gentile, nor does he remain there as a Greek or a Scythian—whatever he may have been before. When he becomes a Christian, Christ is All. Earthly distinctions of rank, if they still exist, as they must while we are in this world, are brought to a minimum within the Church. They are almost obliterated, and what remains is sanctified to sacred ends. Christ is All in the Church by way of glorying. The Greek said, “The Hellenes are a race of heroes. Remember Sparta and Athens. Are we not foremost in civilization, and were we not chief in war? Who set bounds to the Persian tyrant, and bade the boastful monarch bite the dust? We hold our heads erect when we think of Marathon and Salamis.”

But when the Greek joined the Christian Church, he forgot his national boasting, and from then on gloried only in the Cross of Him whose single arm defeated the hosts of Satan, and led captivity captive. The Jew, when despised, returned scorn for scorn and said to Greek and Roman, “You may speak of Marathon, but I sing of the Red Sea. You may boast of broken Persia, but I tell of vanquished Egypt. Mine are the glories of the Lord of Hosts in the far off ages. We were a people when you were as yet unknown, and we are the chosen favorites of Jehovah.”

The moment the Jew sat down at the Gospel supper, he laid aside his hereditary pride and bigotry, and recognized the fact that the Greek was as much a Brother as the believing Hebrew at his side. So the Scythian, when he came into the Christian Church, was no longer a Barbarian—he

spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Grecian fellow Christian. The slave no sooner breathed the air of the Christian Church than his shackles fell from him. He might be a slave at home with his master, but he was no slave there!

While the freeman, though he had been born free, or with a great price had obtained his freedom, never in the Christian Church looked down upon the slave. Bond and free were one in Christ Jesus. Nobody had any personal ground for glory—neither race, nor pedigree, nor rank, nor position, were of any account—but Christ was All. “Christianus sum,” I am a Christian, was and is the universal glorying of all saints. This at the same time obliterated all their sinful national customs. The Greek said originally, “I may certainly indulge in this vice, because the Lacedaemonians have always observed this custom.”

And the Jew, perhaps, might have said, “I will eat nothing common or unclean, neither will I consort with Gentiles, because our fathers did not so.” The Barbarian said, “I cannot submit to the laws of civilized life. My father ranged the desert.” And the Scythian said, “I shall rob, and pillage, and kill, for I am a wild man. Why shouldn’t I? Did not my fathers do so from generation to generation?” When the various tribes came into the Christian Church, down went all separating and evil customs at once. What has Christ said? What has Christ done? What has He bid us? These are Law to us and nothing else. Thus the distinctions of race, the glorying of nationality, and the habits and customs of various nations—all sank into nothing—for Jesus Christ in the Christian Church became All in All. That, I doubt not, is the meaning of the text in its connection. Christ All and in all by way of distinction.

2. Secondly, Christ is All in All to us in another three-fold way—to God, before our enemies, within ourselves. Happy are you, O child of God, that in all your relationships to the Great Judge of all the earth, Christ is All in All to you! You need a Mediator to stand between you and God—Christ is He. You want a High Priest to present, with His own sacrifice, your prayers and praises—Christ is He. You want a Representative to stand at all times before God, an Intercessor to plead for you, one who shall be a daysman akin to you and akin to God—who can put His hand upon both—Christ is that to you.

Whenever God looks upon you in Christ, He sees in you all that ought to be there. Did He look upon you apart from Christ, He would see in you nothing He could commend—but you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Even the Omniscient eye of God detects nothing for which to condemn the soul which is covered with the righteousness of Christ. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies.” Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, is the entire Church as seen in the Person of Christ Jesus, her Representative and Head. Christ is All for us before the Throne of God.

But, alas, we need someone to stand between us and our enemies. There is Satan—how shall I meet him? He will accuse me! Who shall plead my case? Christ is All in All for that. Whatever fiery darts Satan may shoot, Christ is the Shield that can quench those darts. If Satan tempts me, Christ shall plead for me before the temptation comes. Whenever I have to contend with Satan, this is the Weapon with which I should arm myself. If I reason with him, if I bring forward any strength of my own to oppose him, he may well say to me—“Jesus I know. But who are you?” But if I bring Jesus into the conflict, and wield the merit of His blood, and the faithfulness of His promise, the Destroying Angel cannot overcome the sprinkled blood. We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Christ Jesus is both Shield and Sword to us, Armor and Weapons of war.

So in our conflict with the world. Whatever trials you have, my dear Brothers and Sisters, Christ is All in All to meet them. Are you poor? He will make you rich in your poverty by His consoling Presence. Are you sick? He will make your bed in your sickness, and will so make your sickbed better than the walks of health. Are you persecuted? Be it for His sake, and you may even leap for joy! Are you oppressed? Remember how He also was oppressed and afflicted? And you will have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Amidst all the vicissitudes of this present life, Christ is All that the Believer wants to bear him up, and bear him through. No wave can sink the man who clings to this life buoy. He shall swim to Glory on it.

So, too, within myself Christ is All. If I look into the chambers of my inner nature, I see all manner of deficiencies and deformities, and I may well be filled with dismay. But when I see Christ there, my heart is comforted, for He will both destroy the works of the devil, and perfect that which He has begun in me. I am a sinner, but my heart rests on its Savior. I am burdened with this body of sin and death but behold, my Savior is formed in me the Hope of Glory. I am by nature an heir of wrath, even as others, but I am born into the second Adam’s household, and therefore I am beloved of the Most High, and a joint-heir with Christ.

Is there Christ in your heart, Beloved? Then everything that is there that would make you sorrow may also suggest to you a topic for joy. The saint is grieved to think that he has sin to confess, but he is glad to think that he is enabled to confess sin. The saint is vexed that he should have so much infirmity, yet he glories in infirmity because the power of Christ does rest upon him. He is grieved day by day to observe his wanderings, but he is also rejoiced to see how the Good Shepherd follows him and restores his soul. All the evils and shortcomings in me which make me weep, also make me glad when Jesus is seen within. For all I see within myself lacking or sinful, I see a sufficient remedy in Christ who is All in

All. Thus I have given you a second way of meditating upon our text.  
Christ is not only All by way of distinction, but He is All to God, All between us and our enemies, and All within ourselves.

3. We may see another phase of the same meaning if we take a third division. Christ is All for us, He is all to us, He is all in us. Christ is all for us, the Surety, the Substitute in our place to bear our guilt—“For the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” “He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” He is also the Worker standing in our place to fulfill all righteousness for us. He is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. All that God requires us to be, Christ is for us.

He has not presented to God a part of what was done, but has to the utmost farthing paid all that His people owed. Acting as our Forerunner in Heaven, He has taken possession of our inheritance, and as our Surety He secures to us our entrance there. For us all Jesus is All. And this day He is All to us. We trust wholly in Him. I often question myself upon many Christian graces, but there is one thing I never can doubt about, and that is I know I have no other hope but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. If a soul can perish relying with all its power upon the finished work of the Savior, then I shall perish. But if saving faith is an entire reliance upon Him whom God has sent forth to be a Propitiation for sin, then I can never perish until God’s Word is broken.

Can you not say that, dear Brethren, and will it not yield you comfort? Have you anything else you could trust? Have you one good work that you could rely upon? Is there a prayer you have ever offered, an emotion you have ever felt that you would dare to use as a buttress, or as in some degree a prop, to your hope of salvation? I know you reply, “I have nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing! Christ my Savior is all my salvation and all my desire, and I abhor the very idea of putting anything side by side with Him as a ground of my dependence before God.” Oh, then, assuredly you have the mark of Christ’s sheep, for to all of them Christ is All.

I said also that Christ is all in us, and so He is. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ and the work of His Spirit will have to come out of us, and blessed be the day in which it is ejected. If I am growing and advancing, but it is a growth in the flesh and an advance in self, it is a spurious fungus growth. And, like Jonah’s gourd, it will perish in a night. Wood, hay, stubble are quick building, but they are also quick burning—only that which belongs to “Christ formed in me the hope of glory,” will prove to be gold, silver, precious stones. These may seem slow building, but they will abide the fire.

O Christian, pray much and labor much to have Christ in you, for He is all that is worth having in you. He is only the husk of a Christian who has not the precious kernel of Christ in his heart. Christ on the Cross saves us by becoming Christ in the heart. Jesus is, indeed All for us, All to us, All in us.

4. Shift the kaleidoscope, and take the same Truth of God in another way—Christ is the channel of all, the pledge of all, the sum of all. The channel of all. All love and mercy flow from God through Christ the Mediator. We get nothing apart from Him. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” Other conduits are dry, but this channel is always full. “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Christ is the pledge of all. When God gave us Christ, He did as much as say, “I have given you all things.” “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

He is a Covenant to us, the title deeds of the promised rest. And, indeed, Christ is not only the Channel of all, and the Pledge of all, but the Apostle says He is All—so I take it He is the Sum of All. If you are going to travel on the Continent, you need not carry a bed with you, nor a house, nor a table, nor medicine, nor food. If you only have gold in your purse, you have these condensed. Gold is the representative of everything it can buy—it is a kind of universal talisman, producing what its owner wishes for. I have never yet met with a person in any country who did not understand its meaning. “Money answers all things,” says the wise man, and this is true in a limited sense.

But he that has Christ, has, indeed, all things—he has the Essence, the Substance of all good. I have only to plead the name of Jesus before the Father’s Throne, and nothing desirable shall be denied me. If Christ is yours, all things are yours. God, who gave you Christ, has in that one Gift summed up the total of all you will want for time and for eternity, to obliterate the sin of the past, to fulfill the needs of the present, and to perfect you for all the work and bliss of the future.

5. Once more let us view our text in another light. Christ is all we need, all we desire, and all of good that we can conceive. He is all I need. Jesus is the living water to quench my thirst, the heavenly bread to satisfy my hunger, the snow-white robe to cover me, the sure refuge, the happy home of my soul, my meat and my medicine, my solace and my song, my light and my delight. He is all I desire, and when most covetous I only covet more of His Presence. When most ambitious, it is my ambition to be like He. When most insatiable in desire, I only long to be with Him where He is. He is all I can conceive of good. When my imagination stretches all her wings to take a flight into realms beyond where the eagle’s wing has been, yet even then she reaches not the height of the Glory which Christ Jesus has promised her.

She cannot conceive with her most expanded powers of anything more rich and precious than Christ, her Christ, herself Christ’s, and Christ all her own. Oh, if you want to know what Heaven is, know what Christ is, for the way to spell Heaven is with those five letters that make up the word JESUS. When you get Him He shall be All to you that your glorified body shall need, and all your glorified spirit can conceive. O precious Christ, You are All in All!

III.  **I have shown you then, in a very hurried way, what it is that this Truth includes. Now, with greater brevity still, WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH INVOLVE? It involves a great many things. First, it involves the Glory and excellence of Christ. Of whom else could it be said that He is All in All? There are many things in this world that are good, but there is nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be a good medicine, but not a good cordial. The plant of renown is good every way.   
Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ, the Bread of Heaven, is also the Father’s best robe. You cannot expect any finite thing to be good for all things, but Christ is Infinite Goodness. This Tree of Life bears all manner of fruits, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. He is Strength and Beauty, Safety and Sanctity, Peace and Plenty, Healing and Help, Comfort and Conquest, Life here, and Life forever. Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ! What can He be less than God, if He is All? “All.” Is it not a synonym for God? We say there cannot be two Gods, because the one God is everywhere, and fills all space.   
And who, then, can He be who is called “All in All,” but “very God of very God?” Worship Him, my Brethren, with all your hearts! Rejoice in Him! Bless Him from day to day. Let not the world think you poor who are so rich in Him. Never suffer men to think you unhappy, who have perfect happiness in the ever blessed Immanuel!   
See, in the next place, the safety and the blessedness of the Believer. Christ is All. But the Believer can add, “And Christ is mine.” Then the Believer has all things—all that he *will* want, as well as all he *does* want. No emperor that has not Christ is half as rich as he that has Christ and is a beggar. He that has Christ, being a pauper, has all things. And he that has not Christ, possessing a thousand worlds, possesses nothing for real happiness and joy. Oh, the blessedness of the man who can say, “Christ is mine!”   
On the other hand, see the wretchedness of the man who has not the Savior—for if Christ is All, you who believe not on Him are devoid of All—in being destitute of Christ. But you say, “I try my best, I attend public worship, I do a great deal that is good.” You have nothing if you have not Christ. Do not flatter yourself that you are getting on and adding goods to goods in spiritual things. If you have not a Savior you are naked and poor and miserable. You are without All if you are without Christ, who is All. The Christian, then, is rich, but everyone who is destitute of Christ is poor to the extreme of poverty.   
See, too, in the Truth of God before us a rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. They will say, “I have not this, I have not that.” Suppose you have it not—Christ has it—if it is good for anything. “I would gladly cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ this day, but,”—Ah, away with your “buts.” What do you want? “I want true belief,” says one. Come to Christ for it, then. “I want a broken heart,” says another. If you cannot come with a broken heart to Christ, come *for* a broken heart—***“True belief, and true repentance   
Every Grace that brings us near,   
Without money   
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”***We have an old proverb about the folly of taking coals to Newcastle. But what folly must that be which makes a man think that he can take *something* to Christ, when Christ is All? Come, come, come, come to Him, poor Sinner, and let Him be All in All to you! Simply rely upon Him and be at peace.   
How this, again, rebukes the coldness of saints. If Christ is All in All, then how is it we love Him so little? If He is so precious, how is it we prize Him so little? Oh, my dull, dead, cold Heart, what are you doing? Are you harder than adamant, and baser than brutish, that you are not much more moved with ardor and fervent affection towards such a Lord us this? Christ is All, my Brethren, yet look how little we offer to Him—of our substance how scant a portion—of our time how slender a part—of our talents how small a parcel!   
God stir us to holy fervency, that if Christ is All for us, we may be all for Christ! May we lay ourselves out without reservation to the utmost stretch of our power, asking fresh strength from Him that we may do all that can be done by mortal men! And by His Grace may all be done with us by God, that He shall see it to be compatible with His Glory to do!   
Again, by our text another lesson is furnished us. We learn here how to measure young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines—Christ is All. If they know Christ, and are resting in Him, we are bound to say, “Come, and welcome.” Be they poor, be they unlettered—if Jesus Christ is formed in their hearts, even though we can see Him there only as a dim outline—we are to open wide the gate, and receive *them* as Jesus received *us*. Here is a measure, too, by which to measure *ministers*. The fashion of the world is to admire him most who shall speak most rhetorically. Accursed be the day in which oratory was tolerated in the Christian pulpit! It has been the ruin and plague of the Church of God!   
This labor after flowery speech. This seeking after polished periods and gaudy sentences—what is it but a pandering to the world, and a prostitution of the ministry of reconciliation? Had men learned what the Apostle meant when he said, “I Brethren, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom,” they would have preached far otherwise than they have done. We should strive to speak the Gospel simply from our hearts, and then men’s hearts will be impressed with the Truth of God.  
Alas, this toying with fair words, and seeking after pleasing expressions—this dressing up of the Truth of God in the flaunting finery of falsehood—degrades rather than adorns the Gospel! And it has done incalculable damage to souls, and to the advance of Truth. Measure ministers by this—What is there of Christ about them? That ministry which has no savor of Christ in it, be it what it may, is a ministry which the Lord will not own, and that *you* ought not to own. It is not God-sent, and ought not to be received by you. Give me Christ Jesus, though the speech in which He is set forth is of the most uncouth kind, rather than the choicest inventions of the most ingenious thinkers, from which Jesus Christ is absent, or in which He is not exalted.   
Brothers and Sisters, this will also help you to estimate your own devotions. You came to the communion table the other day, but you did not enter into fellowship with Christ. Ah, then there was a lost opportunity. You were in your closet this morning in prayer, but you did not plead the name of Jesus. Ah, then again there was a lost season of devotion. You are a Bible reader, and your eyes glance over the holy Words but you do not see Jesus in each page—then your reading has failed.   
You have been giving to the poor of late, but have you done it for Christ’s sake? You have sought to win souls— have you done it in Christ’s strength? If Jesus is absent, you have offered a sacrifice from which the heart is gone. And among the Romans, no omen was supposed to be so damaging as the absence of the heart from the sacrifice. No Christ, then there can be no acceptance! But a fullness of Christ proves a fullness of acceptance with God.**IV. **There are many other things which I could have said, but time has failed me, and therefore I must close by noticing WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES OF US. Christ is All in All! Therefore “put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, heart of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” The exhibition of the Christ-life in the saints is the legitimate inference from the fact that Christ is All to them. If Christ is All, and yet I, being a Christian, am not like Christ, my Christianity is a transparent sham—I am nothing but a base pretender, and my outward religiousness is a pompous pageantry for my soul to be carried to Hell in—nothing more.   
It is a gilded coffin for a lifeless spirit. I shall perish with a double destruction if I have dared to profane the name of Christ by taking it upon me, when I have not the essence of the Christian religion within me. Orthodoxy, though it is of the most assured sort, is vanity of vanities, unless there is with it an orthodoxy of *life.* And experience—whatever man may say about it, is but a dream, a fiction of his own imagining—if it does not display itself in shaking off the sins of the flesh, and putting on the adornments of holiness.   
O Brethren, these are searching things to every one of us. Who among us lives as he should at home? Could you bear that the angel who visits your house should publish, before the great cloud of witnesses, all that he has seen there? In your shops, in your businesses—you professors—are you always upright and straightforward as Christians should be? You merchants on the Exchange, are not some of you who profess to be Christians as greedy and as overreaching as others? I charge you, if you have any respect for Christ, lay down His name! If you will not endeavor to honor it you will be lost! You covetous money-grubbers, you earth-scrapers who live only for this world—you will be lost! You need not doubt of that, you will be lost sure enough.   
But why need you make the assurance of your condemnation doubly sure by the base imposture of calling yourselves Christians? Meanwhile, let the Ethiopian call himself white if he will. Let the leopard declare that he has no spots. These things shall not matter. But the falsehood of a man who lives without Christ, while calling himself a Christian, brings such dishonor upon Him who was nailed to the tree, and whose religion is that of holiness, that I beseech you, by the living God, give up your profession if you do not endeavor to make it true.  
If you are not living as you should, do not pretend to be what you are not! Seek you unto God, that the life of Christ being in you, you may manifest it in your conversation. Without Christ you are nothing, though you are baptized, though you are members of churches, though you are highly esteemed as deacons, elders, pastors. Oh, then, have Christ everywhere in all things, and constrain men to say of you, “To that man Christ is All in All—I have marked him. He has been with Jesus, he has learned of Him, for he acts as Jesus did.   
God grant a blessing on these words, for Christ’s sake. Amen.**

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Colossians 3, and 4:1-6.

Sermon Readers are respectfully reminded that the 200 boys at the Stockwell Orphanage are supported by voluntary contributions and that these are always thankfully received by C. H. Spurgeon, Clapham.

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ALL AND ALL IN ALL  
NO. 2501

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 24, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1885.

**“Christ is all, and in all.”***Col 3:11***.  
“That God may be all in all.”***1Co 15:28***.**

IN our two texts there are three “alls” rising, one out of the other—the first leading to the second and the second conducting to the third. You will notice at once that the first two are in the present tense. “Christ is all” and, “Christ is in all.” The third one refers to the future—it is yet to be fulfilled. When the great consummation shall come, then shall God be, “all in all.” I shall not detain you with any sort of preface, for my sole endeavor at this time will be to impress these texts upon your memory—in the hope that the Spirit of God may make them a living and abiding influence upon your hearts and lives—that to you, Christ may be all, that Christ may be in you all, and that so, in all that you do, and say, and are, God may be all in all.

I. We begin at THE FOUNDATION WHERE ALL BLESSING BEGINS. “Christ is all.”  
These are but few words, yet what Divine shall ever fully expound them? “Christ is all.” Here is sea-room enough for all godly mariners! Yet with the best wind that ever blew to speed the ship along, and with every sail set and filled with the breeze from Heaven, who shall ever be able to go from one shore of this great Truth of God to the other—“Christ is all”? I shall not venture upon such a voyage! I can but look across this sea and ask you to kindly notice the connection in which the text stands that we may learn exactly what the Apostle meant. Writing, “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,” Paul says, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all.”  
That is to say, in the matter of salvation, “Christ is all.” That which had often seemed the most important thing in the world is here thrown into the background by the Apostolic declaration, “There is neither Greek nor Jew.” For a long time it seemed as if the eternal Light of God was only revealed to the eyes of the seed of the house of Israel. They sat in the brightness and all the rest of the world lay in dense darkness. But, behold, the Christ has come, “a Light to lighten the Gentiles,” and henceforth salvation is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,” but, “Christ is all.”  
It is a great privilege to be born of godly parents, to have come of a race that for generations has feared the Lord. But let no man trust merely in his natural descent. If you had sprung from a lineage of saints. If every one of your progenitors had feared God, yet still, nothing of all this could matter for your own salvation. “Christ is all.” Now may the Gentile dog eat of the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table where He feeds His Israel! No, the dog is transformed into a child—he who was far off is made near! In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile are made one and all the sheep of the Good Shepherd are sheltered in the same fold! We who believe in Jesus are children of him who was called the father of the faithful and though, according to the flesh, “Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not,” yet by faith we become the spiritual seed of the great father of all Believers! As he believed in a son being born according to God’s promise, and in a seed to which the Covenant promises were given, even so do we. And entering into union with Christ Jesus, that blessed Son of the promise, we become joint-heirs with Him, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” You see, then, dear Friends, that it is not race, or pedigree, or descent that saves the soul, but that “Christ is all.”  
Then Paul goes on to say, “There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision,” from which I gather that there is nothing in outward ceremonies which can save. Everything is still of Christ—“Christ is all.” That circumcision in the flesh was ordained of God and it was the mark of the seed that He had chosen. It was not, therefore, lightly to be spoken of. But now, “we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” At this day even the ancient Divine ordinance is put in the background, for, “Christ is all.” So is it with every other ordinance, whether ordained of God or of man. It must never be placed in the front, as if it were the means of salvation! I say to you who may have been sprinkled, or to you who may have been immersed—to you who may bow at your altars, or to you who may come to the Communion Table—I do not place all these rites on a level, certainly, for some are of God and some are not, but I do place them all on a par in this respect—that they enter not into the essence of our salvation! And I say to all of you, “These things cannot save you, for, ‘Christ is all.’” Be you who you may, and do you what you may, you shall not be saved because of your natural birth, nor because of any supposed holy acts that you may perform! Neither shall you be saved by any transactions that may be the work of a human priest! You must have Christ as your Savior and you must rest in Him, alone, or you cannot be saved! He is the one foundation and, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” for, “Christ is all.” The Lord Jesus Christ sums up everything that ordinances can possibly mean and all that pedigree and descent can possibly bring—and He is infinitely more than all of them!  
Read on in this Epistle and you will find that as race and ceremonialism are both put into the background, so also is culture. “There is neither Barbarian nor Scythian, but Christ is all.” Of course it was for many reasons much better to be a Roman citizen than to be a rude barbarian. And it is much better, now, to be a civilized man than an untutored Indian of the Wild West. But so far as vital godliness and the soul’s salvation are concerned, there is no difference! The simplest and most illiterate, upon believing in Jesus Christ, shall find that “Christ is all.” And the most learned and most fully instructed, if they bring any of their learning and their culture and put it side by side with Christ as a ground of trust, shall sorrowfully discover that none of those things can be placed on an equality with Him, but that, “Christ is all.”  
I rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, in this Truth of God! If the Gospel of Christ were something eclectic which could only be received by a superior few, what a poor prospect there would be for the great mass of people among whom we dwell! If the Gospel of Christ were a matter so deep and profound that it could not be understood except by years of educated thought, where would they be who have never had any culture and, perhaps, can scarcely read the letters of a boy’s schoolbook, if, this day, they were lying upon the bed of sickness, expecting soon to stand before God? Blessed be God, we have a remedy for sin’s sickness which the Great Physician understands! And if He is well acquainted with it, it matters not whether the patient fully comprehends it or not! Blessed be God, the effect of Christ’s medicine does not depend upon the degree in which we can realize how it acts, but if we receive it by faith, if it penetrates into the heart, if it takes possession of the affections, it will work in us that wondrous change by which we shall be delivered from the love of sin and saved both from its condemnation and its power! Thank God for a simple Gospel! Blessed be His name that “Christ is all”! If, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you have learned that Christ died for the ungodly. If you know that He is the Son of God and the one great Propitiation for sin, and if you accept Him as such, you have that which has delivered you from going down into the Pit, for God has found a ransom even for you!  
Once more. By this expression, Paul means us to understand that all conditions and position of men in this life are put on a level before Christ, for He adds, “There is neither bond nor free; but Christ is all.” When the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into the world, it contemplated the saving of bondmen as well as of freemen. Of course there was a great distinction between being bond or free, and the Apostle wrote, “If you may be made free, use it rather,” but as to the real power of God’s Grace, there was no distinction between the noblest citizen of Rome and the poor slave who wore an iron collar and was fastened, like a dog, at his master’s gate! Christ’s Grace could enter into the heart of the servile, as well as into the heart of the noble—and could work alike in each.  
Now, hear you, Sirs! It is well that you should be industrious, that you should be thrifty and that you should make your way in the world. But this is not the way to eternal life! What if you should work till your fingertips were raw? What if you labor during the livelong day and night and deprive yourselves of needed sustenance, that you may hoard up gold and silver? With all this, you cannot buy salvation, or be an inch nearer to it. “Christ is all.” And if you lie penniless upon a workhouse bed, there is that in Christ which can save you! If you beg your food from door to door, yet shall you not stand at a disadvantage with this great and blessed Gospel, for it comes freely to you with this message and, as it asks of you no learning, so it asks of you no wealth, no rank and no position—for, from first to last—“Christ is all.”  
Thus have I taken the words in their connection and they are full of important teaching. Remember that they mean just this—that to the man who is saved, Christ is all his trust. Our healing lies in His stripes. Our life lies in His death. Our pardon lies in His having suffered the punishment due to us. Our eternal life is in the fact that He once died for us and that He now lives to make intercession for us. “Christ is all.” You must not add anything to Christ as your ground of confidence, but just lean the weight of your sin, your sorrow, your needs and your desires wholly and entirely upon Him who lives to stand for you before God. Christ, then, is all our trust!  
And, as for our belief, Christ is all our creed. What He has taught us personally and by His Holy Spirit through the Epistles—what He gives us in His Word—this is what we believe, and nothing else! The Bible and the Bible, alone, is the religion of a Christian! “Christ is all”—and all the Truth that there is in this Book is in Him. This revelation of the Word of God is the same revelation as that which is made in the Christ, Himself, who is the true Logos, the Word of God. “Christ is all” as our creed.  
And, further, Christ is all as our example. You may safely do what He did and you may not do what He would not have done. You may judge of the right or wrong of everything by this question—What would Jesus Christ do in these circumstances? You may thus know what you should do. And what you cannot suppose He would have thought of doing, you must not venture to do, for, “Christ is all.” He draws a ring around us and we must not go outside that circumference. He is the atmosphere in which we are to live. He is about us. He is above us. He is beneath us. He is within us. He is everywhere and, to us, if we are Christians, “Christ is all.”  
There is the foundation of all our faith and hope—and I want you who preach and you who teach the children to always keep to this one Truth of God—that “Christ is all.” Many other things have a measure of instruction in them, but Christ is all that is necessary. If you want to save men, if you truly wish to elevate men, if you desire still further to exalt them to the very highest degree of which human nature is capable, remember that “Christ is all” as your lever, and in Him is your fulcrum, and in Him is the power to use the lever! “Christ is all.” You need not go abroad for anything, for “you are complete in Him.” The ship is furnished from stem to stern in Him. The house, from its foundation to its rooftop, is all complete in Him. “Christ is all.” Oh, to know Him! Oh, to have Him as our own! Oh, to live wholly upon Him! Oh, to grow like He and always to keep before our mind’s eyes this great Truth that, “Christ is all”!  
II. Now we are going a step farther to consider the second part of our first text—“Christ is all, and in all.” This is a matter of experience and it reveals to us HOW THE WORK OF GRACE PROCEEDS. Christ is in all His people, this gracious possession is the work of the Spirit of God, by whose means Christ is formed in us, the hope of Glory.  
To my mind it is a very beautiful thing that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into the soul, does not annihilate any part of the personality, but shines in each separate being, for He is not only all, but He is in all His people! There is, for instance, the Greek—the “Gentile”—shall be the word. Very well, the Grace of God does not turn the Gentile into a Jew. He remains a Gentile, but Christ is in him and, therefore, he is made into a new creature. There have been some beautiful specimens of holiness and Grace found in many of the Gentile nations dwelling in the islands of the sea, or among all sorts and conditions of men scattered up and down the world—and Christ has shone gloriously in them. Then comes the Jew. When he is saved, Christ is in him. The Apostles of Jesus were mostly, at least, of that race, and many later Believers have been of the seed of Abraham. But Christ has been in them and He has gloriously displayed Himself in them. The Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling in the Jew, leaves him still a member of the house of Abraham, but, through the Presence of the Lord Jesus within him, how wondrously his whole character is exalted!  
Then you have the man who is circumcised and the man who is uncircumcised—and in each of these, if he is saved, Christ dwells. And each one, therefore, lives according to his light, his knowledge and his standing. Christ enters into the barbarian and though in certain natural respects he remains, to a large extent, what he was before, yet, as soon as Christ enters into him, all of his barbarism that is sinful disappears! He still retains the free spirit of the child of the wilderness or the son of the woods, but how grandly has Christ displayed Himself in such men as he is! The personal piety of a Red Indian, or of an African freshly taken from the wilds of the Dark Continent has been as brilliant and as beautiful— certainly as fresh, bright, clear and striking as the piety of the most educated of the Caucasian race! Whether he is barbarian or Scythian, if Christ is formed in him, the hope of Glory, it is only another form of the same exquisite beauty!  
It is always a pity when our missionaries try to make other nations into English people. If we have pride enough to think so, we may regard ourselves as the model for others to imitate, but it would be a great pity if we should be such a model that every native of India must copy the Englishman! I like the worship of our Black friends in Jamaica and in the Southern States of America, with its delightful simplicity, its vivacity— yes, and I venture to say, even its grotesqueness. And I would not have a black man begin slavishly to imitate the white man. Let him continue to be a black man and let Christ shine in the black man’s face right gloriously. Yes, let a man be a brown man, or a yellow man, or a red man, or whatever color God made him! The more he keeps to his own nationality and reflects the Glory of Christ from that angle, the more will Christ’s Gospel triumph and the more will Christ Himself be honored!  
The Apostle adds, as we have already noticed, “Neither bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” May the day speedily come when there shall not be a bondsman under Heaven! But in those days of the worst of all slavery, the Christian slaves were among the most brilliant gems in the Redeemer’s diadem. Oh, what brave deeds they did for the Crucified One! I should think that it was harder to be a Christian freeman, in those days, than to be a Christian slave. But whether bond or free, whether the man took his place in the Forum among the senators, or his lot was cast yonder among the slaves—either case, if Christ was in him—the Light of God shone gloriously from Him and God was magnified thereby! Christ is all, and Christ is in all His people, each one remaining the same in His individuality, but Christ shining in each one!  
I must again refer you to the connection of our text and ask you to read in the 9thand 10th verses, where Paul says, “You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” You recollect that Adam was made in the image of God and that he lost that image by his sin. But when Christ enters into a man and he is created anew in Christ Jesus, then he receives afresh the image of God. The image of God is Christ Jesus, for He is the express image of His Father’s Glory. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father and, inasmuch as Christ enters into all Believers and makes them like Himself, the image of God is thereby restored in all Believers.  
So, note again that because Christ dwells in him, every Believer becomes a copy of Christ. Read the 13th verse—“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Is not that beautiful—Christ in every Believer—that Christ the image of God, and that Christian the image of Christ so that, just as Jesus freely forgave, so does every Christian freely forgive! Do you find it difficult to forgive one who has wronged you? Then you will find it difficult to get to Heaven! If you cannot enter Heaven unless you are like Christ, how can you be like Christ unless you can freely forgive? This seems a grand opportunity for you to stand on the same platform with Christ and, in some respects, to do the works of Christ when, having been slighted, ungratefully treated, misrepresented, slandered and injured, you can say, “I as freely forgive you as the Lord Jesus Christ forgave me.” This is the token and evidence that Christ is in you—when you become imitators of Christ as dear children!  
It is a remarkable fact, as I have often said to you, that, although our Lord Jesus Christ is more perfect than any other example—indeed, the only perfect example—yet it is more easy to imitate Christ than it is to imitate some of the best of His people! That is curious, but it is a fact. I know a Brother whom I greatly admire, an eminent Christian—I would not mention my own name in the same day with his, he lives so near to God and is such a truly gracious man—yet I could not imitate him. It is quite impossible that my nature should ever become exactly like his. Another Brother, whom I used to know—he is now with God—was equally good, but he was as different from the other good man as anyone could be. They were as opposite as the poles in their temperament and behavior. The first Brother I mentioned is solid, calm, quiet, unexcitable. And I should think that he very seldom laughs and that even then, he does not know that he has done it!  
My other friend used to, sometimes, literally roar with laughter! He was full of earnest love for the souls of men and God blessed him greatly in his service. He had a merry vein and a

humorous spirit—and I was more at home with him than I was with the first one. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ is far more easy to imitate than either of my two friends, for sometimes I am so depressed that I cannot show all the cheerfulness of the one. And at other times, having such a humorous vein in my nature, I would be hypocritical and unnatural if I suppressed it and always acted as if I were as solemn as death itself! But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, albeit that there is never any mention of laughter, yet there were ripples of holy pleasantry in His life and in His Character though He was “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He is more of a Man than the best of other men, and more imitable, though altogether inimitable, than those who can be imitated and, perhaps, can even be excelled.  
What is more, Christ in each one of these Believers creates them all into one body. Read the 14th and 15th verses—“And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body and be you thankful.” The same life is in all Believers—in you and in me—well, then, we are one1 The same life is in ten thousand Christians—then they, also, are all one! If the same life quickens them and they live under the same influences, and they act according to the same rule, then are they one and Christ becomes the glorious Head of a body which He renders glorious by quickening it with His own indwelling!  
I like to think of this blessed Truth of God—Christ in all Believers creating them into one body—this is the beginning of true unity. Here, for instance, is a man who says that he is baptized as I am, but if he has not the life of God within him, I cannot get on with him, whatever he may call himself—I am not in union with him. There, perhaps, comes a Methodist, and we begin to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and I find that he loves Him with all his heart, and I know that I do, though I wish that I loved Him more. And directly we two get on together—we feel that we are one in Christ because of the one Life which quickens us. Do you not feel it to be so? Have you not been reading a book, sometimes, and said to yourself, “Oh, what a blessed book this is! How full of the Divine life”? Yes, and after you have read it, you have been surprised to find that the person who wrote it was a Romanist—for there are many books of that kind—or the writer was a member of some church that, in many respects, lies in very dangerous error! You say to yourself, “I do not care where this man lived, or what he did, I am one with him as far as he is one with Christ.”  
The one common feeling of union to Christ and Christ being in us makes us feel that we are one with each other. Wherever there is, as Augustine used to say, “aliquid Christi”—“anything of Christ”—there our love must go forth, we cannot help it! Christ in you all makes you into one body and unites you together in a mysterious and unique manner. There is not a parallel to it anywhere else—it gives such a living, loving, abiding, undeniable unity that even if you wish to forget it, you cannot! If the man is in Christ, you must love him, do what you may, for you are one body with him.  
Such is this manifestation of Christ in His people, that it leads, further, to the offering of one oblation. Read the 16th verse—“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Yes, all God’s people love God’s Word! They all find a great sweetness in “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” They all delight to sing praises unto the Most High. Montgomery truly wrote— *“The saints in prayer appear as one,”*  
but it is equally true that the saints in praise appear as one. And the saints in love to the Word of God appear as one because Christ, being in them, and Christ being one, they are knit to one another. Oh, how blessed it is for us to have Christ in us!  
And lastly upon this point, all that I have said leads up to each one acting to the glory of one name, for if Christ is in you, the 17th verse is true of you—“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” What a life to lead—Christ taking such entire possession of a man that everything he does, he does as if Christ, Himself, were doing it, because he does it in Christ’s name and by Christ’s power! As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,” so that it shall no longer be yourselves that do it, but Christ that dwells in you. This shall sanctify the most common actions of everyday life and make the whole of the Christian’s career to be sublime, so that while he treads the earth beneath his feet, literally, he is also doing it spiritually— and all the while his conversation is in Heaven.  
I must just linger one minute here. You all agreed with me when I spoke about Christ being all. You understood clearly that He is the only ground of our hope. Can you also go with me in this part of my subject— Christ is in all His people? Is Christ formed in you, the hope of Glory? Do you know anything about an indwelling Christ? Verily I say unto you, the Christ on the Cross will never save you unless there is also Christ within you! It is the Christ on the Cross in whom we trust, but the outcome of that trust is that He is born in our hearts! His power comes from His love, His Grace, His truth, Himself—and we live because He lives in us. Do you understand this? If you do not, I pray God that you may, for, unless Christ is in you, you know what the Apostle says—“Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are reprobate?” If you are disapproved of God, Christ is not in you. If Christ is not in you, you are disapproved of God. But if He lives in you, you are “accepted in the Beloved” and that life of yours shall never die out, but you shall, by-and-by, behold your Savior’s face in the kingdom of His Glory.  
Brothers and Sisters, we are not what we ought to be! We are not what we want to be, we are not what we shall be! But we are something very different from what we used to be. The change in us is as great as in that blind man who said, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” The change is not merely external, but it is vital! The Lord has taken away the heart of stone out of our flesh and given us back the heart of flesh which belonged to man in his unfallen nature—and then upon this heart of flesh He has also worked wondrously, making it conscious to spiritual influences which once did not affect it, and writing upon the fleshy tablets of that renewed heart, His perfect Law. Glory be to the name of Jehovah, a notable miracle has been performed upon us! A miracle so marvelous that it is comparable to the resurrection from the dead and, in some respects, it even surpasses the wonders of creation, itself! We shall tell this story in the streets of the New Jerusalem and we shall draw around us attentive crowds as we narrate our experience and tell the tale of the sin which ruined us, and of the mercy which reclaimed us!  
Thus have we gone up the second rung of this golden ladder. First, “Christ is all.” Next, “Christ is in all.”  
III. Now kindly turn back in your Bibles to our other text—the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chapter, and 28th verse—“That God may be all in all.” First, Christ is all. Next, Christ is in all His people, but THE CONSUMMATION, the top-stone of all is “that God may be all in all.”  
The passage in which this text stands seems to be a very difficult one to understand. The common meaning that is given to it by nearly every interpreter I have ever met with, I do not believe or accept. It seems to a great many to be taught here that there is to come a time, called, “the end,” when the Lord Jesus Christ, having conquered all His enemies, is to resign His position, abdicate His Throne and cease to be King, “that God may be all in all.” Let us read the connection of the passage—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son, also, Himself, be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”  
The general meaning given to these words is that there is to be a time when the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ will come to an end of itself and He will deliver up the Kingdom to God, ceasing, Himself, to be King. I can only say that if this is the teaching of this text, it is not taught anywhere else in the whole Bible—nobody can find any parallel passage to it, or anything like it. Neither do I believe that it is taught in the Bible at all— neither here nor anywhere else! And I can say that for this reason I cannot see that there is to be any end whatever to the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ.  
You perceive that it is the Son who is to be subject to the Father but it is of the Son that we read in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “Unto the Son He says, Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever,” where the Father, manifestly speaking to the Son, in His complex Person declares that His Throne is to be forever and ever. Brethren, in the day when the Christ shall have overcome all His enemies and Death, itself, shall be destroyed, there will be no abolition of His mediatorial kingdom! There still stands in the Scriptures this promise of our Lord Jesus Christ—“To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” Does that mean that we are to have a temporary reign with a temporary Christ—a brief rule with a short-lived Monarch? I do not believe it!  
Moreover, the priesthood enters into the mediatorial office most eminently, yet “the Lord swore and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” If the priesthood is to continue forever— and Melchisedec was king as well as priest—then the kingdom of Christ is to continue, world without end. Moreover, in the Book of the Revelation—not to mention the almost innumerable passages to the same effect—we find that when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, it is added, “and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.” When the kingdoms are brought back, they will be the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Then we read of “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” And when all kingdoms are subdued and the Lord God Omnipotent reigns, then we are told to expect the announcement, “The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready.” What does all this mean but a continuance of that dispensation in which the Christ, the Son of Man, as the Son of God, shall be still at the head of His people, still their Priest and still their King and still reigning? And that is exactly what this passage says, if you will kindly look at it again and dismiss all previous prejudices from your minds!  
The fact is our Lord Jesus Christ has performed and is still performing, a work which will end in putting everything into its proper order. Now, the proper order, according to the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the 11th chapter, and the third verse, is this—“I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” This is how it stands—the woman with the man for her head, the man with Christ for his Head—and Christ with God for His Head. Such is the Scriptural order—an order which has been disturbed all through except with regard to the Father and the Son, for God has always been the Head of Christ! Now, Christ has come into the world to restore that right order from the bottom, right up to the top! And it is to be so restored, first, by Christ becoming the Head of men—when He shall have put down all His enemies under His feet and when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, “for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”  
Christ is come into the world that all the evil that is in the world should be subdued. And He will drive it out of the world. There shall remain no power that shall dare revolt against the majesty of Heaven! Over the whole surface of this globe, beneath the new heavens and on the new earth, there shall yet be the Kingdom established of which Jesus Christ shall be the supreme Head and over which He shall reign forever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The Lord hasten it in His own time!  
Well, and what then?” asks one. “Does it not say that He is to deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and to be subject to the Father?” Exactly so. Supposing that India had been in revolt against our Queen and that a Viceroy had been sent there, and that he had warred against all the rebellious tribes and kingdoms, and they had all been conquered. He telegraphs to the Queen, “Your Majesty’s empire is at your feet.” Does he therefore cease to be Viceroy? Not necessarily in the least degree! He may still remain as ruler and yet have delivered up the kingdom. I believe that to be the meaning of this passage—that Christ has so conquered the Kingdom that it is all God’s.  
But what does it mean when it says that then shall the Son also be subject unto the Father? It means that He is subject, now, and that even then He will continue to be subject to the Father, that is all. It cannot mean that at a certain time Christ will become subject to God, because He has been so ever since that day of His glorious humiliation when, for His people’s redemption, he took upon Himself the form of a Servant— and that condition is not to cease. He is still to be the Representative of God even when He shall have put down all power and all authority under His feet and when God has put all things under His feet. It is manifest that He that did put all things under Him is not, Himself, under Him. And it is clear, from the text, that even then, God shall be the Head of Christ. I do not know whether you catch my thought yet, but it is just this—all evil subdued, all the saints having Christ dwelling in them, Christ the Head of all these saints, and then God, still as God, all the more surely and securely supreme over all things—for the Head of Christ is God and God is all in all.  
The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that every day this should be the great consummation to be kept in view, “that God may be all in all.” For this, the heroic labors of the Son of Man here on earth! For this, His cruel death! For this, His rising again! For this, His grasping of the mediatorial scepter! For this, His ruling in Providence! For this, His management of the world’s affairs! For this, His Second Coming and the glory of His saints! All this, while it continues to bring Glory to Him, has been done in subjection to His great Father’s will. He has accomplished it all as the Father’s Representative and Messenger, sent by Him to do it and then, when it is all done, and He shall reign forever and ever, even then, the Son, Himself, shall continue in that position in which He put Himself long, long ago, “that God may be all in all.” Then will the whole universe, restored and brought back to its proper place, be ordered according to the eternal Covenant arrangement.  
And the practical outcome of it all is this. I want you, beloved Friends, so to live as to be persuaded that it will be so one day, that God shall be all in all—that there shall come a time when we shall stand before the Throne of God, God in us all, and everything in us of God, when all His elect, all His redeemed, all to whom Christ is all, and all in whom Christ is, shall only know God as their All in All! God all in their very existence. God their all in every hymn. God their all in every pulsing of their joy. God their all in every hope. God their all in every memory. God all to them and God in all of them to the very fullest—all redeemed, all delivered from the power of sin, all quickened into the Divine and God-like life, all summed up in Christ, Christ comprehending them all—and then Christ Himself Head over all things to His Church, standing and giving unto God the Glory forever and ever, that the Father may be All in All.  
I see no abdication of a throne here. I see not even a change of dispensation and I do not believe in any! But, as surely as God lives, our King lives, and our Priest still ministers before Him. And He shall still be King over His people, though still, as the Christ, in His infinite goodness, abiding as subject unto God, Himself, God forever and ever, and yet, in His complex Person, making the Father to be All in All. Looking forward to that glorious consummation, we can join again in the jubilant hymn we sang just now—  
*“Hallelujah!—hark! the sound,  
From the center to the skies,  
Wakes above, beneath, around,  
All creation’s harmonies!  
See Jehovah’s banner furled,  
Sheathed His sword! He speaks—‘tis done! And the kingdoms of this world  
Are the kingdoms of His Son.  
He shall reign from pole to pole,  
With illimitable sway.  
He shall reign when, like a scroll,  
Yonder heavens have passed away!  
Then the end—beneath His rod,  
Man’s last enemy shall fall!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All in All.”*  
Now let us begin at the beginning. This is very simple—“Christ is all.” Then may the Spirit of God help us to go on to the next rung of the ladder—“Christ is in all His people.” There is the difficulty! Is He in you, Beloved? Have you received Him by faith? Then comes the third step—this may be, at present, full of mystery, but we shall see it in brighter light, by-and-by—God shall be all in all. So shall He be to us even now! Amen and Amen.

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“CHRIST IS ALL”  
NO. 2888

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 4, 1876.

**“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All and in all.”** *Col 3:11***.**

PAUL is writing concerning the new creation and he says that, in it, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All.” The new creation is a very different thing from the old one. Blessed are all they who have both seen the Kingdom of Heaven and entered into it. In the first creation, we are born of the flesh—and that which is born of the flesh is, even at the best, nothing but flesh and can never be anything better. But in the new creation, we are born of the Spirit and so we become spiritual and understand spiritual things. The new life in Christ Jesus is an eternal life and it links all those who possess it with the eternal realities at the right hand of God above.

In some respects the new creation is so like the old one that a parallel might to drawn between them, but, in far more respects, it is not at all like the old creation. Many things are absent from the new creation which were found in the old one—and many things which were accounted of great value in the first creation are of little or no worth in the new—while many distinctions which were greatly prized in the old creation are treated as mere insignificant trifles in the new creation. The allimportant thing is for each one of us to put to himself or herself the question, “Do I know what it is to have been renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who creates anew? Do I know what it is to have been born twice, to have been born-again—born from above by the effectual working of God, the Holy Spirit? Do I understand what it is to have spiritually entered a new world wherein dwells righteousness?” It is concerning this great Truth of God that I am going to speak and, first, I shall say something upon what is obliterated in the new creation. And, secondly, upon what stands in its place.

I. First, as to WHAT IS OBLITERATED IN THE NEW CREATION. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free.”

That is to say, first, in the Kingdom of Christ there is an obliteration of all national distinctions. I suppose there will always be national distinctions in the world until Christ comes, even if they should then be all terminated. The mischief was worked when men tried to build the city and tower, in the plain of Shinar, and so brought Babel, or confusion into the world. The one family became transformed into many—a necessary evil to prevent a still greater one. The unity at Babel would have been far worse than the confusion has ever been, just as the spiritual union of Babylon, that is, Rome, the Papal system, has been infinitely more mischievous to the Church and to the world, than the division of Christians into various sects and parties could ever have been. Babel has not been an altogether unmitigated evil. It has, no doubt, worked a certain amount of good and prevented colossal streams of evil from reaching a still more awful culmination.

Still, the separation is, in itself, an evil and it is, therefore, in the Lord’s own time and way to be done away with. And spiritually it is already abolished. In the Church of Christ, wherever there is real union of heart among Believers, nationality is no hindrance to true Christian fellowship. I feel just as much love toward any Brother or Sister in Christ who is not of our British race as I do toward our own Christian countrymen and countrywomen. Indeed, I sometimes think I feel even more the force of the spiritual union when I catch the Swiss tone, or the French, or the German breaking out in the midst of the English, as we often do here, thank God. I seem to feel all the more interest in these beloved Brothers and Sisters because of the little difference in nationality that there is between us. Certainly, Beloved, in any part of the true Church of Christ, all national distinctions are swept away and we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.”

Under the Christian dispensation, the distinction or division of nationality has gone from us in this sense. We once had our national heroes— each nation still glories in its great men of the heroic age, or in its mythical heroes—but the one Champion and Hero of Christianity is our Lord Jesus Christ who has slain our dragon foes, routed all our adversaries, broken down the massive fortress of our great enemy and set the captives free! We sing no longer of the valiant deeds of our national heroes— St. George, St. Andrew, St. Patrick, St. Denis and the other so-called “saints” who were either only legendary, or else anything but “saints” as we understand the term! We sing the prowess of the King of all saints, the mighty Son of David who is worthy of our loftiest praises! King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table we are quite willing to forget when we think of “another King, one Jesus,” and of another Table, where they who sit are not merely good knights of Jesus Christ, but are made kings and priests unto Him who sits at the head of the festal board. Barbarian, Scythian, Greek, Jew—these distinctions are all gone as far as we are concerned—for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We boast not of our national or natural descent, or of the heroes whose blood may be in our veins. It is enough for us that Christ has lived, Christ has died and Christ has “spoiled principalities and powers” and trampled down sin, death and Hell even as He fell amid the agonies of Calvary.

Away, too, has gone all our national history, so far as there may have been any desire to exalt it for the purpose of angering Christian Brothers and Sisters of another race. I wish that even the names of wars and famous battlefields could be altogether forgotten, but if they do remain in the memories of those of us who are Christians, we will not boast as he did who said, “But ‘twas a famous victory.” Nor will we proudly sing of—

*“The flag that braved a thousand years*

*The battle and the breeze.”*  
As Christians, our true history begins—no, I must correct myself, for it had no beginning except in that dateless eternity when the Divine Trinity in Unity conceived the wondrous plan of Predestinating Grace, electing love, the Substitutional Sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of His chosen people, the full and free justification of all who believe and the eternal glory of the whole redeemed family of God! This is our past, present and future history! We who are Christians take down the Volume of the Book wherein these things are written and we make our boast in the Lord—and thus the boasting is not sinful.

As to laws and customs, of which each nation has its own, it is not wrong for a Christian to take delight in a good custom which has been long established, or earnestly to contend for the maintenance of ancient laws which have preserved inviolate the liberty of the people age after age. But, still, the customs of Christians are learned from the example of Christ—and the laws of Believers are the precepts laid down by Him. When we are dealing with matters relating to the Church of Christ, we have no English customs, or French customs, or American customs, or German customs. Or, if we have, we should let them go and have only Christian customs henceforth. Did our Lord Jesus Christ command anything? Then, let it be done! Did He forbid anything? Then away with it! Would He smile upon a certain action? Then perform it at once! Would He frown upon it? Then mind that you do the same! Blessed is the Believer who has realized that the laws and customs for the people of God to observe are plainly written out in the life of Christ and that He has become to us, now, “All and in all.”

Christ, by giving liberty to all His people, has also obliterated the distinctions of nationality which we once located in various countries. One remembers, with interest, the old declaration, “Romanus sum,” (“I am a Roman”), for a citizen of Rome, wherever he might go, felt that he was a free man whom none would dare to hurt, else Roman legions would ask the reason why! And an Englishman, in any country wherever he may be, still feels that he is one who was born free and who would sooner die than become a slave, or hold another man or woman in slavery. But, Brothers and Sisters, there is a higher liberty than this—the liberty with which Christ has made His people free! And when we come into the Church of God, we talk about that liberty and we believe that Christians—even if they have not the civil and religious rights which we possess—should still be as free in Christ as we are. There are still many in various parts of the world who do not enjoy the liberties that we have, who, notwithstanding their bonds, are spiritually free, for, as the Son has made them free, they are free, indeed!

Christ also takes from us all inclination or power to boast of our national prestige. To me it is prestige enough to be a Christian—to bear the cross Christ gives me to carry and to follow in the footsteps of the great Cross-Bearer. What is the power, in which some boast, of sending soldiers and cannon to a distant shore, compared with the Almighty Power with which Christ guards the weakest of us who dares to trust Him? What reason is there for a man to be lifted up with conceit just because he happens to have been born in this or that highly-favored country? What is such a privilege compared with the glories which appertain to the man who is born-again from above—who is an heir of Heaven, a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ—and who can truthfully say, “All things are mine, and I am Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

What is the wondrous internationalism that levels all these various nationalities in the Church of Christ and makes us all one in Him? Spiritually we have all been born in one country—the New Jerusalem is the mother of us all. It is not my boast that I am a citizen of this or that earthly city or town. It is my joy that I am one of the citizens of “a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Christ has fired all of us who are His people with a common enthusiasm. He has revealed Himself to each one of us as He does not unto the world and, in the happy remembrance that we belong to Him, we forget that we are called by this or that national name and only remember that He is our Lord and that we are to follow where He leads the way! He has pointed us to Heaven as the leader of the Goths and Huns pointed his followers to Italy and said, “There is the country whence come the luscious wines of which you have tasted. Go and take the vineyards and grow the vines for yourselves.” And so they forgot that they belonged to various tribes and they all united under the one commander who promised to lead them on to the conquest of the rich land for which they panted. And now we who are in Christ Jesus, having tasted of the Eshcol clusters which grow in the heavenly Canaan, follow our glorious Leader and Commander as the Israelites followed Joshua, forgetting that we belong to so many different tribes, but knowing that there is an inheritance reserved in Heaven for all who follow where Jehovah-Jesus leads the way!

The next thing to be observed in our text is that ceremonial distinctions are obliterated. When Paul says that “there is neither circumcised nor uncircumcised,” he recalls the fact that, under the Law, there were some who were peculiarly the children of promise to whom were committed the oracles of God. But there is no such thing as that now. Then there were others who stood outside the pale of the law—the sinners of the Gentiles, who were left in darkness until their time for receiving the Light of God should come. But Christ has fused these two into one and now, in His Church, “there is neither Greek nor Jew.” I marvel at the insanity of those who try to prove that we are Jews—the lost ten tribes, forsooth! I grant you that the business transactions of a great many citizens of London afford some support to the theory, but it is only a theory—and a very crazy one, too! But suppose they were able to prove that we are of the seed of Abraham after the flesh? It would not make any difference to us, for we are expressly told that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised”—for all Believers are one in Christ Jesus!

The all-important consideration is—Are we Christians? Do we really believe in Jesus Christ to the salvation of our souls? The Apostle truly says, “Christ is All,” for He has done away with all the distinctions that formerly existed between Jews and Gentiles. He has leveled down and He has leveled up. First He has leveled down the Jews and made them stand in the same class as the Gentiles, shutting them up under the custody of the very Law in which they gloried—and making them see that they can never come out of that bondage except by using the key of faith in Christ. So our Lord Jesus has stopped the mouths of both Jews and Gentiles and made them stand equally guilty before God, for, on the other hand, He has leveled up the outcast and despised Gentiles and has admitted us to all the privileges of His ancient Covenant, making us to be heirs of Abraham in a spiritual sense, “though Abraham is ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not.” He has given to us all the blessings which belong to Abraham’s seed because we, too, possess like precious faith as the father of the faithful had. So, “now in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace.” Oh, what a blessing it is that all national and ceremonial distinctions are gone forever and that “Christ is All” to all who believe in Him!

A more difficult point, perhaps, is that of social distinctions. But that also has gone from the Church of Christ. “There is neither slave nor free,” says the Apostle. Well, blessed be God, slavery has almost ceased to exist! Among Christians it has become a by-word and a proverb, though there was a time when some of them pleaded for it as a Divinely-ordained institution. But, oh, may the last vestige of it speedily disappear and may every man see it to be both his duty and his privilege to yield to his brother man his God-given rights and liberties! Yet, even in such a free country as ours happily is, there are still distinctions between one class and another and I expect there always will be. I do not suppose there can ever be in this world, any system, even if we could have the most profound philosophers to invent it, in which everybody will be equal. Or, if they ever should be all equal, they would not remain so for more than five minutes. We are not all equal in our form, shape, capacity and ability—and we never shall be! We could not have the various members of our body all equal—if we had such an arrangement as that, our body would be a monstrosity! There are some members of the body which must have a more honorable office and function than others have—but all the members are in the body and necessary to its due proportion.

So it is in the Church of Christ which is His mystical body. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, how very, very minute are the distinctions between the various members of that body! You, my Brother, are rich, as the world reckons riches. Well, do not boast of your wealth, for riches are very apt to take to themselves wings and fly away! Probably more of you are poor, as far as worldly wealth is concerned. Well, then, do not murmur, for “all things are yours” if you are Christ’s! And soon you will be where you will know nothing of poverty again forever and ever! True Christianity practically wipes out all these distinctions by saying, “This man, as one of Christ’s stewards, has more of his Lord’s money entrusted to him than others have, so he is bound to do more with it than they do with their portion—he must give away more than they do.” This other man has far less than his rich brother, but Christ says that he is responsible for the right use of what he has—not for what he has not. As the poor widow’s two mites drop into the treasury of the Lord, He receives her gift with as sweet a smile as that which He accorded to the lavish gifts of David and Solomon. In His Church, Christ teaches us that if we have more than others, we simply hold it in trust for those who have less than we have— and I believe that some of the Lord’s children are poor in order that there may be an opportunity for their fellow Christians to minister to them out of their abundance.

We could not prove our devotion to Christ, in practical service such as He loves best, if there were not needy ones whom we could succor and support. Our Lord has told us how He will say in the Great Day of Account, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat,” but that could not be the case if there were not one of the least of His brethren who was hungry and whom we could feed for His sake. “I was thirsty and you gave Me drink.” But He could not say that if none of His poor brethren were thirsty. “I was sick and you visited Me.” So there must be sick saints to be visited and cases of distress, of various kinds, to be relieved, otherwise there could not be the opportunity of practically proving our love to our Lord. In the Church of Christ it ought always to be so, Brothers and Sisters—we should love each other fervently with a pure heart, we should bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ—and we should care for one another and seek, as far as we can, to supply one another’s needs. The rich brother must not exalt himself above the poor one, nor must the poor Christian envy his richer Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for in Him all these distinctions are obliterated and we sit down, at His Table, as members of the one family of which He is the glorious and ever-living Head—and we dwell together in unity, praising Him that national, ceremonial and social distinctions have, for us, all passed away and that “Christ is All and in all.”

II. Possibly I have taken up too much of our time in describing what is obliterated from the old creation, so, now I will try more briefly to show you WHAT TAKES ITS PLACE IN THE CREATION—“Christ is All and in all.”

First, Christ is all our culture. Has Christianity wiped out that grand name, “Greek”? Yes, in the old meaning of it and, in some senses, it is a great pity that it is gone, for the Greek was a cultured man. The Greek’s every movement was elegance itself. The Greek was the standard of classic beauty and eloquence, but Christianity has wiped all that out and written, in its place, “Christ is All.” And, Brothers and Sisters, the culture, the gracefulness, the beauty, the comeliness, the eloquence—in the sight of the best Judge of all those things, namely, God, the EverBlessed—which Christ gives to the true Christian, is better than all that Greek art or civilization ever produced! So we may cheerfully let it all go and say, “Christ is All.”

Next, Christ is all our Revelation. There was the “Jew”—he was a fine fellow and there is still much to admire in him. The Semitic race seems to have been specially constituted by God for devout worship and the Jew, the descendant of believing Abraham, is still a firm Believer in one part of God’s Word. He is, spiritually, a staunch Conservative in that matter, the very backbone of the world’s belief. Alas, that his faith is so incomplete and that there is mingled with it so much tradition received from his fathers! Will you wipe out that name, “Jew”? Yes, because we who believe in Jesus glory in Him even as the Jew gloried in having received the oracles of God. Christ is “the Word of God” Incarnate—and all the Divine Revelation is centered in Him—and we hold fast the eternal Truths of God which have been committed unto us because of the power of Christ that rests upon us.

Then, next, Christ is all our ritual. There is not a circumcision now. That was the special mark of those who were separated from all the rest of mankind. They bore in their body undoubted indications that they were set apart to be the Lord’s peculiar possession. Someone asks, “Will you do away with that distinguishing rite?” Yes, we will, for, in Christ every true Christian is set apart unto God—marked as Jesus Christ’s special separated one by the circumcision made without hands!

Further, Christ is all our simplicity. Here is a man who says that “uncircumcision” is his distinguishing mark and adds, “I am not separated or set apart from others, as the so-called ‘priest’ is. I am a man among my fellow men. Wherever I go, I can mingle with others and feel that they are my brethren. I belong to the ‘uncircumcision.’ Will you rule that out?” Yes, we will, because we have, in Christ, all that uncircumcision means, for he who becomes a real Christian is the truest of all men—he is the most free from that spirit which says, “Stand by yourself, come not near me for I am holier than you.” He is the true philanthropist, the real lover of men, even as Christ was! He was no separatist, in the sense in which some use that word. He went to a wedding feast. He ate bread in the house of a publican. And a woman of the city who was a sinner was permitted to wash His feet with her tears. He mingled with the rest of mankind and “the common people heard Him gladly.” And He would have us to be as He was—the true Man among men, the great Lover of our race.

Once more, Christ is all our natural traditions and our unconquerableness and liberty. Here is “the rude barbarian,” as the poet calls him. He says, “I shall never give up the free, manly life that I have lived so long. By my unshorn beard,” (for that is the meaning of the term, Barbarian), “I swear it shall be so.” “By the wild steppes and wide plains over which I roam unconquerable,” says the Scythian, “I will never bend to the conventionalities of civilization and be the slave of your modern luxuries.” Well, it is almost a pity to have done with Barbarians and Scythians, in this sense, for there is a good deal about them to be commended—but we must wipe them all out. If they come into the Church of Christ, He must be “All, and in all,” because everything that is manly, everything that is natural, everything that is free, everything that is bold, everything that is unconquerable will be put into them if “Christ is All” to them. They will get all the excellences that are in that freedom—without the faults appertaining to it!

Further, “Christ is All,” as our Master, if we are a “slave.” I think I see, in the great assembly at Colosse which Paul addressed, one who said, “But I am a slave! A man bought me at the auction mart and here, on my back, are the marks of the slave-holder’s lash.” And I think I hear him add, “I wish that disgrace could be wiped out.” But Paul says, “Brother, it is wiped out! You are no slave, really, for Christ has made you free.” Then the great Apostle of the Gentiles comes and sits down by his side and says to him, “The Church of Christ has absorbed you, Brother, by making us all like you—for we are all servants of one Master. And look,” says Paul, as he bares his own back and shows the scars from his repeated scourging, “from henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” “And so,” he says, laying his hand on the poor Christian slave, “I, Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ, share your servitude and with me you are Christ’s free man.”

Lastly, Christ is our Magna Charta. Yes, our liberty itself if we are “free.” Here comes the free man who was born free. Shall that clause stand, “neither slave nor free”? Oh, yes, let it stand! But not so stand that we glory in our national freedom, for Christ has given us a higher freedom! I may slightly alter the familiar couplet and say—

*“He is the free man whom  
The Lord makes free,  
And all are slaves beside.”*

Oh, what multitudes of people in London are slaves—miserable slaves to the opinions of their neighbors—slaves to the caprice of Mrs. Grundy— slaves to “respectability!” Some of you dare not do a thing that you know to be right because somebody might make a remark about it. What are you but slaves? Yes, and there are slaves in the pulpit, every Sunday, who dare not speak the Truth of God for fear somebody will be offended! And there are also slaves in the pews and slaves in the shops and slaves all around. What a wretched life a slave lives! Yet, till you become a Christian and know what it is to wear Christ’s bonds about your willing wrists, you will always feel the galling fetters of society and the bonds of custom, fashion, or this or that! But Jesus makes us free with a higher freedom, so we wipe out the mere terrestrial freedom which is too often only a sham—and we write, “Christ is ALL.”

So, to conclude, remember that if you have Christ as your Savior, you do not need anybody else to save you. I see an old gentleman, over there in Rome, with a triple crown on his head. We do not want him, for “Christ is All.” He says that he is the vicegerent of God. That is not true, but if it were, it would not matter, for “Christ is All,” so we can do without the Pope! Then I see another gentleman with an all-round dog collar of the Roman kennel type—he tells me that if I will confess my sins to him as the priest of the parish, he can give me absolution—but, seeing that “Christ is All,” we can do without that gentleman as well as the other one, for anything that is over and above “all” must be a superfluity, if nothing worse. So is it with everything that is beside or beyond Christ— faith can get to Christ without Pope or priest! Everything that is outside Christ is a lie, for “Christ is All.” All that is true must be inside Him, so we can do without all others in the matter of our soul’s salvation.

But supposing that we have not received Christ as our Savior? Then how unspeakably poor we are! If we have not grasped Christ by faith, we have not laid hold of anything, for “Christ is All!” And if we have not Him who is All, we have nothing at all. “Oh,” says one, “I go to chapel regularly.” Yes, so far, so good. But if you have not Christ, you have nothing, for “Christ is All.” “But I have been baptized,” says another. Ah, but if you have not savingly trusted in Christ, your Baptism is only another sin added to all your others! “But I go to communion,” says another. So much the worse for you if you have not trusted in Christ as your Savior. I wish I could put this thought into the heart of everyone here who is without Christ—no, I pray the Holy Spirit to impress this thought upon your heart—if you are without Christ, you are without everything that is worth having, for “Christ is All.”

But, Christians, I would like to make your hearts dance by reminding you that if you have Christ as your Savior, you are rich to all the intents of bliss, for you have “all” that your heart can wish to have! Nobody else can say as much as that! The richest man in the world has only got something, though the something may be very great. Alexander conquered one world but you, Believer, in getting Christ as yours, have this world and also that which is to come—life and death, time and eternity! Oh, revel in the thought that, as Christ is yours, you are rich to an infinity of riches, for “Christ is All.”

Now, if Christ really is yours and as Christ is All, then love Him, honor Him and praise Him! Mother, what were you doing this afternoon? Pressing that dear child of yours to your bosom and saying, “She is my all”? Take back those words, for they are not true! If you love Christ, He is your All and you cannot have another “all.” Someone else has one who is very near and very dear. If you are that someone else and you have said in your heart, “He is my all,” or, “She is my all,” you have done wrong, for nothing and no one but Christ must be your “all.” You will be an idolater and you will grieve the Holy Spirit if anything, or anyone except Christ becomes your “all.” You who have lately lost your loved ones and you who have been brought low by recent losses in business—are you fretting over your losses? If so, remember that you have not lost your “all.” You still have Christ and He is “All.” Then what have you lost? I know that you have something to grieve over, but, after all, your “light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for you a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory.” Therefore, comfort yourself with this thought—“I have not really lost anything, for I still have All.” When you have all things, find Christ in All and when you have lost all things, then find all things in Christ. I do not know, but I think that the latter is the better of the two!

Now, if Christ is all, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, let us live for Him! If He is All, let us spend our strength and be ready to lay down the last particle of it that we have and to die for Him—and then let us, whenever we need anything, go to Him for it, for “Christ is All.” Let us draw upon this bank, for its resources are infinite—we shall never exhaust them!

Lastly, and chiefly, let us send our hearts right on to where He is. Where our treasure is, there should our hearts be, also. Come, my Heart, up and away! What have you here that can fill you? What have you here that can satisfy you? Plume your wings and be up and away, for there is your roosting-place! There is the Tree of Life which can never be felled. Up and away and build there forever! The Lord help each one of you to do so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Isa 43:1-25***.**

Verse 1. But now thus says the LORD that created you, O Jacob, and He that formed you, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are Mine. I cannot pause to comment upon each of the precious sentences here, but every word is full of marrow and fatness. Ask the Lord to enable you to feed upon each sentence as it passes before your mind.

2-5. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not flow over you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you: therefore will I give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not: for I am with you. That always seems to me to be the master-consolation—“I am with you.” What more does the most troubled heart need than God’s Presence?

5. I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west. O Church of God, your elect members shall all, in due time, be fetched in— however far they may have wandered!

6, 7. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the South, keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yes, I have made him. And that in a double sense, for God’s people are twice made—made first in creation, but marred by the Fall—and then new-made as “new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

8. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. There are plenty of them, for our proverb is true, “There are none so blind as those that will not see, and none so deaf as those that will not hear.” But even to such people as these God makes His appeal.

9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. God challenges all the false gods and their worshippers to produce a single fulfilled prophecy—to show one instance in which they have truly and correctly foretold any event or a chain of events! But all Jehovah’s prophecies have been fulfilled, or will be in due season.

10-13. You are My witnesses, says the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no Savior. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore you are My witnesses, says the LORD, that I am God. Yes, before the day was, I am He and there are none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall reverse it? It is a great blessing to know that the Lord is God—and not merely to know that as a matter of fact, but to feel it, to realize it—and to trust in God and act towards Him conscious that He, and He alone, is the living and true God.

14-17. Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the LORD, which makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as a wick. You know what happened to the army of Sennacherib when it came against Jerusalem. Horses and chariots were there in vast numbers and all the pomp and pageantry of a vast host of armed men. But they slept their last sleep—from which they never rose—when the Angel of the Lord flew through their ranks. So was it with Babylon itself. When the set time came, that long-established empire with its colossal power, was swept away like a vision of the night! It blazed like a wick and then was quenched forever. What cannot God do for His people when He lifts up His almighty arm?

18. Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old. For something better is going to be done in the future than all that God has done in the past! He will eclipse all His previous achievements and outdo the mightiest of His own miracles!

19, 20. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor Me. As it slakes its thirst at an unknown spring.

20. The dragons and the owls. Alarmed and startled, as God’s people pass by on their way to the land which God would give them.

20-22. Because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise. But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob. Have any of you restrained prayer of late? Has your path to the Mercy Seat been but little trodden? Then listen to God’s gentle rebuke—“You have not called upon Me, O Jacob.”

22. But you have been weary of Me, O Israel. Weary of God? Have any of us grown weary of fellowship with Him? Weary of His Truth? Weary of His Day? Weary of His service? Oh, what strange ingratitude this is on our part!

23. You have not brought Me the small cattle of your burnt offerings; neither have you honored Me with your sacrifices. There are some of God’s people, at any rate, who forget to offer their sacrifices to God. If they do love Christ at all, their love is not practical, not self-sacrificing—it does not lead them to bring love-gifts to Him.

23. I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense. “I have made no irksome tax of it. I have not demanded anything of you. I have left it to your own free will to give according as your love suggests.”

24. You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices: but—Alas, instead of good, there has been evil!

24. You have made Me to serve with your sins. What? Made God our servant when we ought to have served Him? Alas, I fear it is often so even with some of His own people!

24. You have wearied Me with your iniquities. O Sirs, how sad it is when God’s people are weary of Him and He is weary of them! What shall we read after this? Surely the next sentence will be a thunder-clap and a lightning flash will blaze out of the sacred page! Listen—and be amazed at the mercy of the Lord!

25. I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins. What a blessed God to deal so graciously with His ungrateful erring people!

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“CHRIST IS ALL”  
NO. 3446

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1915. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “Christ is all.”  
***Col 3:11***.

MY text is so very short that you cannot forget it and, I am quite certain, if you are Christians at all, you will be sure to agree with it! What a multitude of religions there is in this poor wicked world of ours! Men have taken it into their heads to invent various systems of religion and if you look around the world, you will see scores of different sects. But it is a great fact that while there is a multitude of false religions, there is but one that is true. While there are many falsehoods, there can be but one truth—real religion is, therefore, one. There is but one Gospel—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful thing it is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be born of humble parents and live as a poor Man in this world for the purpose of our salvation! He lived a life of suffering and trial and, at last, through the malignity of His enemies, was crucified on Calvary as an outcast of society. “Now,” they said, “there is an end of His religion! Now it will be such a contemptible thing, that nobody will ever call himself a Christian—it will be discreditable to have anything to do with the name of the Man, Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth.” But it is an amazing fact that this religion has not only lived, but is at this hour as strong as ever! Yes, the religion He founded still exists and is still powerful, and constantly expanding. While other religions have sunk into the darkness of the past, and the idols have been cast to the moles and to the bats, the name of Jesus is still mighty—and it shall continue to be a blessed power so long as the universe shall endure!

The religion of Jesus is the religion of God. Hence, notwithstanding all the disgrace and persecution which it has had to encounter, it still exists, and still flourishes! It is this religion which I shall attempt to preach to you—the one Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—and the text embraces it all in the most comprehensive manner, “Christ is all.”

I shall use it, first, as a test to try you and, afterwards, as a motive to encourage you. I want, first, to sift you, to see how many of you are the people of God, and how many are not. I shall make my text a great sieve and put you in it to see which is wheat and which is chaff. We must consider this passage in two or three senses in order, first, to use it as—

I. A TEST TO TRY YOU.

Christ must be all, as your Great Master and Teacher . There are some who set up a certain man as their authority. They regard him as their master, they look up to him as their teacher—and whatever he says is right—it is the truth and is not to be disputed. Or, perhaps, they have taken a certain book, other than the Bible, and say, “We will judge all things by this book”—and if the preacher does not teach exactly the creed written in that book, he is set down as not sound in the faith—and this they do not hesitate to say at once, because he does not come up to the standard of their little book! We meet with many people in this world who make their creed, their one little narrow creed, everything—and they measure everything and everybody by that. But, my Friends, I must have you say that “Christ is all,” and not any man, however good or great, before I can allow that you are Christians. We have not to follow men. Our faith stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God! We are to follow no man, except as far as he follows Christ, who alone is our Master! Be not deceived—submit not yourselves to creeds, to books, or to men—give yourselves to the study of God’s Word, derive your creed and the doctrines of your faith from it, alone, and then you will be able to say—

*“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”*

Let Christ be your only Master, and say, in the words of our text, “Christ is all.” Now can you say this, or are you boasting, “The Baptists are all”—“The Wesleyans are all”—“The Church of England is all”? As the Lord lives, if you are saying that, you do not know His Truth because you are not testifying that, “Christ is all,” but simply uttering the Shibboleth of your little party! I should like to see the word, “party,” blotted out from the vocabulary of the Christian Church! I thank God that I have no sympathy whatever with that which is merely sectarian, and have Grace given me to protest against it, and to exclaim—

*“Let party names no more*

*The Christian world overspread”*  
since—  
*“Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,  
Are one in Christ, their Head.”*  
If “Christ is all” to you, you are Christians, and I, for one, am ready to give you the right hand of brotherhood! I do not mind what place of worship you attend, or by what distinctive name you may call yourselves— we are Brothers and Sisters in Christ and I think, therefore, that we should love one another. If, my Friends, you cannot embrace all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter to what denomination they may belong, and cannot regard them as your Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, and as belonging to the universal Church, you have not hearts large enough to go to Heaven because, if such are your contracted views, you cannot possibly say, “Christ is all.”  
Next, Christ must be all as your principal object in life—your chief good. Your great aim must be to glorify Christ on earth, in the hope and expectation of enjoying Him forever above. But as it regards some of you, Christ is not your all. You think more of your shop than you do of Him. You are up early in the morning looking at your ledgers, and all day long toiling at your business. Do not misunderstand me—I dislike lazy people who let the grass grow over their shoes—and God disapproves of them, too! We want no lazy preachers of the Gospel. The true Christian will say, “I know that I am bound to be diligent in business, but I want to work for eternity as well as for time. I need something besides earthly riches. I need an inheritance not made with hands, a mansion not built by man, a possession in the skies.” Are you making this world your all? Poor Souls, if you are, the world and the fashion thereof are passing away—your all will soon be gone! I fancy I see a rich man, one whose gold is his all, when he gets into the next world, looking for his gold, and wondering where it is, and being, at last, compelled to exclaim, in despair, “Oh, my all is gone!” But if you can say that Christ is your all, then your treasure will never be gone, for He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, you shall be happy and blessed, for you shall be crowned with glory and made to sit with Christ on His Throne forever!  
“Well,” says some easy-going gentleman, “I do not make business my all, I assure you. Not I! My maxim is, let us enjoy this life, let us fill the glass to the brim and live in pleasure while we may.” I also have a word for you. Do you think that such a course of conduct will fit you for Heaven, for the enjoyments of eternity? Do you imagine that when you come to die, it will be any pleasure for you to think of your drunkenness? When you are lying on a sick bed, will your oaths bring you any peace, as they reverberate upon your conscience, just as I hear my voice, at this moment, echoing back to my ears the words I am saying? I think I see you starting up as you hear your blasphemies against God thus returning upon you, while, with a mind oppressed with anguish and eyes starting from their sockets, you exclaim, in your terror, “I hear my own oaths again! God is coming to call me to judgment, to demand of me why I dare blaspheme His name!” And the Judge will say, “You, with oaths and curses, profaned My holy name! You asked Me to curse your soul and now I will do it! You prayed in your profane moments that you might be lost, and now you shall be!” How horrible that would be! You who say pleasure is all, let me warn you that you will have to drink the bitter dregs of the cup of pleasure to all eternity, no matter how sweet the draught may now be to your taste!  
But there are some more moderate people who are by no means extravagant in their pleasures and are great sticklers for religion! They go to Church or Chapel every Sunday and believe themselves to be a very good sort of people—such as will be accepted at the Last Day, and placed at the right hand of the Throne of God. Again I put the question, can you say, “Christ is all”? No, you cannot say that. Many of you make the externals of religion your all, resting in the letter, but knowing or caring nothing for the spirit. This will not do! And you are not such Christians as Christ will acknowledge if you are making anything your all but Him! Religion is not to be stowed away in the dark attic of the brain. Christianity is a heart religion, and if you cannot say, from the very depths of your being, “Christ is all,” you have neither part nor lot in the blessings and privileges of the Gospel—and your end will be destruction, everlasting banishment from the Presence of the Lord! God grant it may not be so, but that in both your lives and mine we may each be enabled to say of a truth, “Christ is all”—and that we may meet again around the eternal Throne of God!  
Next, Christ will be all as the source of your joy. Some people seem to think that Christians are a very melancholy sort of folk, that they have no real happiness. I know something about religion and I will not admit that I stand second to any man in respect of being happy. So far as I know religion, I have found it to be a very happy thing—  
*“I would not change my blest estate,  
For all that earth calls good or great.”*  
I used to think that a religious man must never smile, but, on the contrary, I find that religion will make a man’s eyes bright, cover his face with smiles and impart comfort and consolation to his soul, even in the deepest of his earthly tribulations! In illustration of this, I might tell you the story of a poor man who lives in one of the courts in Holborn, who experiences great joy in religion, even in the midst of the deepest poverty. A Christian visitor, going up into the poor man’s room at the top of the house, said, “My Friend, how long have you been in this place?” “I have not been downstairs, nor walked across the room, these 12 months.”  
“Have you anything to depend upon?”  
“Nothing,” he replied, but recollecting himself, he added, “I have a good Father up in Heaven, and I depend upon Him entirely, and He never lets me down. Some kind Christian friends are sure to call, and they never go away without leaving me something. And I get enough to live on and pay my rent, and I am very happy. I would not change places with anybody in the world, for I have Jesus Christ with me, and my heavenly Father will take me Home, by-and-by, and then I shall be as rich as any of them—shall I not, Sir? Sometimes I get very low, and Satan tells me that I am not a child of God, and that I had better give up all as lost, but I tell him that he is a great coward to come and meddle with a poor weak creature like I am, and I show him the blood, Sir. And I tell him the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin—and when I show Satan the precious blood, Sir, he leaves off tempting me, and immediately flees, for he cannot bear the sight of the Savior’s blood.”  
Thus we see that true religion can cheer the sick man’s couch, can make the poor man feel that he is rich and bid him be joyful in the Lord! Well did the old man say that the devil cannot bear the sight of the Savior’s blood! And if, beloved Friends, you can take Christ’s blood and put it on your conscience, however sinful you may have been, you will be able to sing of Christ as all your hope, all your joy and all your support! I ask you who love Jesus—does religion ever make you unhappy? Does love to Jesus distress you and make you miserable? It may bring you into trouble, sometimes, and cause you to endure persecution for His name’s sake. If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer tribulation. But all the afflictions which you may be called upon to endure for Him will work for your good, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed hereafter!  
Now, then, let me ask, could you agree with me while I have been speaking? Can you now say that Christ is your only Master, your chief good, your only joy? “Oh, yes, I do love Jesus because He first loved me.” Then, welcome, Brother! Welcome, Sister! You are one with Jesus, and we are one with each other! But if you cannot say it, how terrible it shall be with some of you when you shall find your gourds wither, the crops whereon you now lean struck down at a blow, your false refuges swept away and, deprived of all your feathers and finery, your soul will appear before God in its true character! May it not be so with any of you, but may you be united to Christ by living faith which works by love and purifies the heart! Secondly, I shall now consider the text as—  
II. A MOTIVE TO ENCOURAGE YOU.  
“Christ is all.” My beloved Friends, in what is He all? Christ is all in the entire work of salvation. Let me take you back to the period before this world was made. There was a time when this great world—the sun, the moon, the stars and all which now exist throughout the whole of the vast universe—lay in the mind of God like unborn forests in an acorn cup. There was a time when the Great Creator lived alone and yet He could foresee that He would make a world, and that men would be born to people it. And in that vast eternity a great scheme was devised, whereby He might save a fallen race. Do you know who devised it? God planned it from first to last! Neither Gabriel nor any of the holy angels had anything to do with it. I question whether they were even told how God might be just and yet save the transgressors. God was all in the drawing up of the scheme, and Christ was all in carrying it out! There was a dark and doleful night! Jesus was in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood which fell to the ground—nobody then came to bear the load that had been laid upon Him. An angel stood there to strengthen Him, but not to bear the sentence. The cup was put into His hands and Jesus said, “Father, must I drink it?” And His Father replied, “If You do not drink, sinners cannot be saved”—and He took the cup and drained it to its very dregs! No man helped Him. And when He hung upon that accursed tree of Calvary, when His precious hands were pierced, when—  
*“From His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down,*  
there was nobody to help Him. He was “all” in the work of salvation! And, my Friends, if any of you shall be saved, it must be by Christ alone! There must be no patchwork! Christ did it all and will not be helped in the matter. Christ will not allow you, as some say, to do what you can, and leave Him to make up the rest! What can you do that is not sinful? Christ has done all for us! The work of Redemption is all finished. Christ planned it all and worked it all out! And we, therefore, preach a full salvation through Jesus Christ!  
What could we poor mortals do towards saving ourselves? Our best works are but mean and worthless to that great end. I am sure I could not do it. My preaching—I am ashamed of that, and there are a thousand faults in my prayers! God needs nothing of us by way of “making up” Christ’s work, but He cancels all the sins and blots out all the transgressions of everyone who trusts to His Son’s death!  
If I have found Christ, I have found all. “I have not strong faith,” you say. Never mind, Christ is all. “I do not sufficiently feel my sins”—but Christ is all. Many people think they must feel a load of repentance before they may hope Christ will receive them. I know every child of God will repent, but we are not all brought to the Cross by the terrors of the Law. It is not your feelings, my Friends, that will save you, but only Christ—Christ standing in your place, Christ being your Substitute! If, feeling your need of His Grace to pardon you, and His righteousness to justify you before God, you can but just look to Christ, though you have nothing good about you, you will have done all that is necessary to carry you to Heaven—because it is not your act that can save you—but the act of Christ alone! A little while ago I had a conversation with an Irishman who had been to hear me preach. He had come to ask me, he said, the way of salvation. “What troubles me,” he said, “is this—God says that He will condemn the sinner, and punish him—then how can God forgive, because He must punish if He would keep His word?” I placed before him the Scriptural view of the Atonement, in the substitution of Christ for the sinner, and the poor man was astonished and delighted beyond measure, never having understood the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel way of salvation before! “Is it really so?” he asked. “It is in the Bible,” I replied. “Then the Bible must be true,” he said, “for nobody but God could have thought it!”  
If Jesus Christ is our Surety, Friends, we are safe from the demands of the Law. If Christ is our Substitute, we shall not suffer the penalty due to sin, for God will never punish the same sin twice. If I have nothing but Christ, I do not need anything else, for Christ is all! If Christ is your all, you will not need anything to help you, either in living or in dying! Now for two thoughts before I close.  
1. If a man has Christ, then what else does he need? If a man has Christ, he has everything! If I need perfection, and I have Christ, I have absolute perfection in Him! If I need righteousness, I shall find in Him my beauty and my glorious dress. I need pardon, and if I have Christ, I am pardoned! I want Heaven and if I have Christ, I have the Prince of Heaven, and shall be there, by-and-by, to live with Christ and to dwell in His blessed embrace forever! If you have Christ, you have all! Do not be desponding, do not give ear to the whispers of Satan that you are not the children of God, for if you have Christ, you are His people and other things will come, by-and-by. Christ makes you complete in Himself. As the Apostle says, “You are complete in Him.” I think of poor Mary Magdalene—she would have nothing to bring of her own—she would remember that she had been a harlot, but when she comes to Heaven’s gates, she will say, “I have Christ,” and the command will go forth, “Let her in, Gabriel! Let her in!” Here comes a poor squalid wretch. What has he been doing—he has never learned to write, he scarcely went even to a Ragged School, but he has Christ in his heart! “Gabriel, let him in!” Next comes a rich bad man, with rings on his fingers and fine clothes upon his person—but the command is, “Shut the gates, Gabriel! He has no business here!” Then comes a fine flaming professor of the Gospel, but he never knew Christ in his heart. “Shut the gate, Gabriel!” If a man has Christ, he has all for eternity—but if he has not Christ, he is poor, blind, naked and will be miserable forever! Will not you, then, who are listening to me now, resolve, in the strength of the Lord, to seek Him at once and make Him your Friend? No matter what may be your state or condition, you are invited to come to Him!  
You blind, you lame, who are far from Christ, come to Him and receive your sight, and obtain strength! He is made your all—you need bring nothing in your hand to come to Him. “Ah!” say one, “I am not good enough yet.” Beggars do not talk thus! They consider that the more needy they are, the more likely are they to obtain that for which they ask. The worse the dress, the better for begging. It is the same with respect to the Gospel—you are invited to come to Christ just as you are, naked and miserable—that He may clothe and comfort you!  
2. My last thought is this—How poor is that man who is destitute of Christ! If I were to say to some one of you that you are poor, you would reply, “I am not poor—I have £250 a year coming in—a decent house and an excellent job.” And yet, if you have not Christ, you are a poor man, indeed. Look at that poor worldling with a load of £10,000 upon his back, a quantity of stocks and annuities in one hand, policies and railway scrip in the other—but he is wretched with all his wealth, though he can hardly carry it! There is a poor beggar woman, who says to him, “Let me take a part of your burden.” But the miserable man refuses all assistance and resolves to carry all his load himself. But by-and-by he comes to a great gulf and, instead of finding these riches help him, they hang around his neck like millstones and weigh him down! Yet there are some who would do anything for gold. If there is one man more miserable than another in Hell, it must be the man who robbed his neighbors to feather his own nest—such feathers will help the flight of the arrows which shall pierce his soul to all eternity! No matter what your wealth, if you have not Christ, you are miserably poor—but with Christ, you are rich to all eternity!  
I think I see one of you ungodly ones in your last moments. Someone stands by your bedside and watches your face. The death-sweat comes over you and the big drops stand on your brow—the strong man is bowed down and the mighty one falls—and now the eyes close and the hand falls powerless—life is fled. Ah, but the soul never dies! Up it flies to appear at God’s bar. How will it appear there? Oh, the poor soul without Christ! It will be a naked soul—it will have no garment to cover it—it will be a perishing soul, no salvation for it! Mercy cannot be secured, then! It will be in vain to pray, then, because the lamp will be put out in eternal darkness! And the Judge will say, in tones that will pierce you to the quick, “Depart from Me, you cursed!”  
May God give all of you Grace to repent and to embrace the salvation which is revealed in the Gospel! Every sin-sick soul may have Christ, but as for you who are Pharisees and trusting in yourselves that you are righteous—if you know nothing about sin, you can know nothing about Christ. The way to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “But what is it to believe?” you ask. I have heard of a captain who had a little son, and this little boy was very fond of climbing aloft. One day he climbed to the masthead, and the father saw that if the boy attempted to return, he would be dashed to pieces. He therefore shouted to him not to look down, but to drop into the sea. The poor boy kept fast hold of the mast, but the father saw it was his only chance of safety, and he shouted once more, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, drop, or I will shoot you.” The boy is gone! He drops into the sea and is saved. Had he not dropped, he would have perished. This is just your condition! As long as you cling to works and ceremonies, you are in the utmost peril! But when you give yourselves up entirely to the mercy of Christ, you are safe! Try it, Sinner! Try it, that is all. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” is Christ’s promise, and it shall never fail you. The invitation is to all who thirst. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come, and take the Water of Life freely.”  
I have heard that in the deserts where they can only get water at long intervals, they send a man on a camel in search of it. When he sees a pool, he springs off his beast, and before he drinks, he calls out, “Come,” and there is another man at a little distance, and he shouts, “Come,” and one further away still repeats the word, “Come,” until the whole desert resounds with the cry, “Come,” and they come rushing to the water to drink! Now I do not make the Gospel invitation wider than the declaration of the Word of God, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Whoever you are, and whatever you may have been, if you feel your need of Christ, “Come,” and He will receive you, and give you to drink of the Water of Life freely!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Colossians 3;** *Col 4:1-4***;** *Psa 28:1-6***.**

Colossians 3.  
Verse 1. If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Oh, how often we need to be called to this, for the flesh is groveling and it holds down the spirit. Very often we are seeking the things below as if we had not yet attained the new life, and did not know anything about the resurrection power of Christ within the soul! Now, if it is that you, Believers, have risen with Christ, do not live as if you had never done so, but “seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.”

2. Set your affection. Not “your affections.” Tie them up into one bundle. Make one of them.  
2. On things above, not on things on the earth. You say that you were dead with Christ and that you have risen with Christ. Live, then, the risen life, and not the life of those who have never undergone this matchless process! Live above.  
3. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. The old life is dead. You are dead to it. You will not be consumed by it—you cannot be controlled by it. You have a newer and higher life. Let it have full scope.  
4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory. Christ was hidden while He was here. The world knew Him not. So is your life. But there is to be a glorious manifestation! When Christ is made manifest, so shall you be. Wait for Him.  
5. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth— fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Since you are dead, let all the lusts of the flesh be put to death. Kill them! They were once a part of you. Your nature lusted this way. Mortify them! Do not merely restrain them and try to keep them under! These things you are to have nothing to do with.  
6, 7. For which things the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. In which you also walked some time, when you lived in them. “When you lived in them.” But now you do not live in them. You are dead to them. If it should ever come to pass that you fall into any of these things, you will loathe yourself with bitterest repentance that you could find comfort, satisfaction, life in them. You are dead to them.  
8-10. But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. No lies. Such communications are filthy. But you put these things away through your union with Christ in His risen life. Therefore, abhor them. Avoid the very appearance of them and cry for Grace to be kept from them, for you have been “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”  
11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. In the new life there is no distinction of race and nationality! We are born into one family. We become members of Christ’s body and this is the one thing we have got to keep up—separation from all the world! No separations in the Church, no disunion, nothing that would cause it, for we are one in Christ and Christ is all! Now, as we have to put off these things, that is the negative side—that is the Law’s side, for the Law says, “You shall not.” But now look at the positive side.

12. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, hearts of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. This is what you have got to wear, even on the outside—to put them on, not to have a latent kindness in your heart and a degree of humbleness deep down in your soul if you could get at it—but you are to put them on. They are to be the very clothes you wear! These are the sacred vestments of your daily priesthood. Put them on!

13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. Just as readily, just as freely, just as heartily, just as completely!

14-15. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts. For that is the great foundation of every godly fruit. We are in such a hurry, in such dreadful haste, so selfish, so discontented, so impetuous, and the major part of our sins spring from that condition of mind! But if we were godly, restful, peaceful, how many sins we would avoid! “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.”

15. To which, also, you are called in one body; and be you thankful. It looks like a very small virtue to be thankful. Yet, dear Friends, the absence of it is one of the grossest of vices! To be ungrateful is a mean thing. To be ungrateful to God is a base thing! And yet how many may accuse themselves of it! Who among us is as grateful as he should be? Be thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you—Alexander had a casket of gold studded with gems to carry Homer’s works. Let your own heart be a casket for the command of Christ. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.”

16-18. Richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with Grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. See how our being Christians does not relax the bonds of our Christian relationship? On the contrary, it calls us to the higher exercise of the responsibilities and duties connected therewith!

19. Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Oh, there are some spirits that are very bitter! A little thing puts them out and they would take delight in a taunt which grieves the spirit. I pity the poor woman who has such bitterness where she ought to have sweetness—yet there are some such husbands.

20-21. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is wellpleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. The duties are mutual. Scripture maintains an equilibrium. It does not lay down commands for one class, and then leave the other to exercise whatever tyrannical oppression it may please! The child is to obey, but the father must not provoke.

22. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers. How much there is of that! How quickly the hands go when the master’s eye looks on! But the Christian servant remembers God’s eyes and is always diligent. “Not with eye service as men pleasers.”

**Col 4:1-2**. But in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ. But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done; and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you, also, have a Master in Heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. See how he keeps putting that in—“Be you thankful”—“with thanksgiving.” Why, that is the oil that makes the machinery go round without its causing obstruction! May we have much of that thanksgiving.

3, 4. Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. So the preacher of the Gospel asks your prayers—and it is a part of the duties arising out of the relationship between Christians that those who are taught should pray for those who teach God’s Word.

[Psa 28:1-6](tw://bible.*?id=19.28.1-19.28.6|_AUTODETECT_|)*.*Verse 1. *Unto you will I cry, O LORD my Rock: benot silent to me: lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit.* Oh, if God did not hear prayer, we would become like dead men—yes, like lost men. Our fall or despair would be terrible, indeed. “Lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down into the pit.”

2. *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto You,when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.* Is that the way you pray, dear Friend? I know there are some who, if they have uttered certain good words—got through a form of prayer—are perfectly satisfied. As to whether God hears them or not, that does not trouble them. But if you are a true child of God, it will be your main thought in prayer, “Will He hear me? Will He hear me? Will He answer me?” And you will think nothing of a prayer at all unless you have the comfortable, believing persuasion that your prayer has reached the ear and heart of God. Oh, believe us, for some of us know by experience that prayer is a real thing! It is no repetition of words. It really is the heart speaking into the ear of God—and God does graciously respond when prayer is truly offered.

3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts.* We are often afraid lest we should get numbered with them—   
*“Oh, were it not for Grace Divine,*

*Their fate so d readful had been mine.”*“Gather not my soul with sinners,” is the prayer of many a godly man. When he looks within and sees the sin that is there—and what he deserves from the hand of God, apart from the blood and righteousness of Christ—he begins, indeed, to pray, “Draw me not away with the wicked. O Lord, do not let me wander into doctrinal error or into errors of life, or into laxity of behavior, or into backslidings, but keep me fast, for unless You hold me fast— ELECTION—ITS DEFENSES AND EVIDENCES  
NO. 2920

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1862.

**“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance…And you became followers of us, and of the Lord having received the word**

**in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.”***1Th 1:4-6***.**

AT the very announcement of the text, some will be ready to say, “Why preach upon so profound a Doctrine as Election?” I answer, because it is in God’s Word, and whatever is in the Word of God is to be preached! “But some Truths of God ought to be kept back from the people,” you will say, “lest they should make an ill use of them.” That is Popish doctrine! It was upon that very theory that the priests kept back the Bible from the people—they did not give it to them lest they should misuse it. “But are not some Doctrines dangerous?” Not if they are true and rightly handled. The Truth of God is never dangerous—it is error and reticence that are fraught with peril! “But do not men abuse the Doctrines of Grace?” I grant you that they do! But if we destroyed everything that men misuse, we would have nothing left! Are there to be no ropes because some fools will hang themselves? And must cutlery be discarded and denounced because there are some who will use dangerous weapons for the destruction of their adversaries? Decidedly not! Besides all this, remember that men read the Scriptures and think about these Doctrines and, therefore, often make mistakes about them. Who, then, shall set them right if we who preach the Word hold our tongues about the matter?

I know that some men who have embraced the Doctrine of Election have become Antinomians. Such men would probably have found other excuses for their misdeeds if they had not sheltered themselves under the shadow of this Doctrine. The sun will ripen the noxious weed as well as the fruitful plant, but that is not the fault of the sun, but of the nature of the weed, itself! We believe, however, that more persons are made Antinomians through those who deny the Doctrine than through those who preach it. One evidence of this is that in Scotland. You will scarcely find a congregation of Hyper-Calvinists—the simple reason being that the Church in Scotland holds entire the whole Doctrine upon this matter and her ministers, as a rule, are not ashamed to preach it fearlessly and boldly—and in connection with the rest of the faith.

Take any Doctrine and preach upon it exclusively, and you distort it. The fairest face in the world, with the most comely features, would soon become unseemly if one feature were permitted to expand while the rest were kept in their usual form. Proportion, I take it, is beauty—and to preach every Truth of God in its fair proportion, neither keeping back any nor giving undue prominence to any, is to preach the whole Truth as Christ would have it preached! On a Gospel thus entire and harmonious, we may expect to have the blessing of the Most High. So much by way of preface, not by way of apology. It is not my custom to offer any apology for speaking the Truth of God!

I. WHAT IS THIS DOCTRINE OF ELECTION? Let us try to understand it as spoken of in the text—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

There is such a thing as election . Any man who should deny that man is a free agent might well be thought unreasonable, but free will is a different thing from free agency. Luther denounced free will when he said that “free will is the name for nothing.” And President Edwards demolished the idea in his masterly treatise. God is the universal Agent and does as He wills—and His will is supremely good. He is the superlative Agent and man, acting according to the devices of his own heart, is nevertheless overruled by that Sovereign and wise legislation which causes the wrath of man (that agency in which the creature cannot govern himself) to praise Him and the remainder thereof He restrains. How these two things are true I cannot tell. It is not necessary for our good, either in this life or the next, that we should have the skill to solve such problems. I am not sure that in Heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the Sovereignty of God meet, but both are great Truths. God has predestinated everything, yet man is responsible, for he acts freely and no constraint is put upon him even when he sins and wantonly and wickedly disobeys the will of God! But so many as are saved, you will say, are saved because they believe. Certainly it is so! It is most true—God forbid I should deny it—but why do they believe? They believe as the result of the working of the Grace of God in their hearts. Since every man who is saved confesses this, since every true Believer in the world acknowledges that something special has been done for him more than for the impenitent, the fact is established that God does make a difference. No one ever heard it laid as an impeachment against the Lord that He has made such a difference, so I cannot see why He should be impeached for intending to make that difference—which is the Doctrine of Election! I am saved, but I know it is not because of any goodness in me. And if you are saved, you will freely confess that it is the distinguishing love of God that has made you to differ. The Doctrine of Election is simply God’s intention to make the difference between people which you know exists. While He gives mercy to all, He gives more mercy to some so that the mercy already received shall be made effectual to their eternal salvation.

This Election of God is Sovereign . He chooses as He wills. Who shall call Him to account? “Can I not do as I will with My own?” is His answer to every quibbler. “No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God?” is the solemn utterance that silences everyone who would impugn the Justice of the Most High. He has a right, seeing we are all criminals, to punish whom He will. As King of the universe, He doubtless acts with discretion, but still according to His Sovereignty. Wisely, not wantonly, He rules, but always according to the counsel of His own will. Election, then, is Sovereign.

Again, Election is free. Whatever may be God’s reason for choosing a man, certainly it is not because of any good thing in that man! He is chosen because God will do so. We can get no further. We get as far as those words of Christ, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight,” and there we stop—for beyond that no philosophy and no Scripture can take us.

As it is Sovereign and free, so Election is irreversible. Having chosen His people, He does not cast them away nor call back the word that is gone from His lips, for it is written, “He hates putting away.” He is of one mind and who can turn Him?

Once more, Election is effectual. For “whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

And this Election is personal, for He calls out His children one by one by their names. He calls them even as He leads out the stars and so He brings them, every one, to the Father’s House above.

We have thus given a statement as to what this Doctrine is. There we will leave it. Our present objective is not so much to expound the Doctrine as to strike a blow or two at certain errors which are very common and which spring out of it. I know, dear Friends, there are some who are so afraid of this Doctrine that the mention of it produces alarm. If they were to meet a lion in their way, they would not be more terrified than they are when they see this Doctrine in Scripture or hear it from the pulpit!

II. Therefore, secondly, we will NOTICE WHAT ARE THE DEFENSES OF THIS DOCTRINE and try, if we can, should you be laboring under any distress of mind about it, to remove your difficulties.

Will you please remember, then, that this is not a point which you can understand at the commencement of spiritual and religious life? You would not teach your children, I suppose, to say their prayers backwards and begin at, “Amen.” And you are beginning at the wrong end when you want, first of all, to know your election instead of commencing with repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! Election is a lesson for the more advanced students. Faith and hope must be learned, first of all, in the infant class to which we all must go if we would be wise unto salvation.

Now, if a child should have a book of algebra put into his hand and should puzzle himself and say, “I shall never get an education, for I cannot understand this.” And then take down some ancient classic and say, “I cannot comprehend this, either,” you would say, “Dear Child, you have nothing to do with these yet! Here is a sampler book for you—a primer. Here you have A, B, C—learn this, first, and then, step by step, you shall attain to the rest.” Even so it is with us. Simple trust in Christ is the first thing you have to understand. After that you shall know the high, the sublime and the glorious Doctrine of God’s Decrees—but do not begin with these! You will mystify and ruin yourself—you will lose your way in a fog and get no good thereby.

Again, it is very certain that whatever this Doctrine may be—and we will have no dispute about it just now—this Doctrine cannot possibly be inconsistent with certain plain promises in God’s Word. Such promises as these—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Why, I might quote by the hour together some of these promises which are as wide as the poles—invitations that must not be narrowed, exhortations which are addressed to every man and woman under Heaven—in which every one of them is bidden to hear and live. “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters.” You know the class of promises to which I allude. Now these are the Words of God which are for you—get hold of them— come to Jesus Christ with them in your hands and rest assured the Doctrine of Election, instead of pushing you back, shall stand like the servants about your father’s table to make music while your whole being shall dance to the glorious tune! It shall be like a dish upon the table at the feast of the returning prodigal, of which you shall eat to the very full! It shall by no means repulse you or show anything to you which may keep you from hoping in Christ.

Once more, it is quite certain that whatever it may be, this Doctrine of Election does not deliver you from your duty. Now what is your duty? “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” So much is this your absolute duty that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed.” This, more than anything else is the reason of men’s condemnation! The Scripture says this is the one great sin. Of the Spirit of Truth we read that “when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin—of sin because they believe not on Me.” Very well, then—in as much as God has so put it, that He commands you this day to trust Christ and to believe on Him—that is what you have to see to—and you may rest perfectly sure that falling back on the Doctrine of Election in order to exonerate you from what God commands you to perform is but a pitiful pretense! You are commanded to believe and what God commands, no Doctrine may teach that it is unfit for you to do! May God help you to believe, for this Doctrine comes not to excuse you. The Gospel commands you and Election through the Holy Spirit enables you. It is your duty to believe, but no man ever was saved as a matter of duty, for that which saves is the gift of God. But your business now is with Christ, only, and not with the Decrees of the Father which are all in the keeping of Christ and shall presently be revealed to you. You have to go to Christ, first, and to His Father afterwards, for He says, “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” You must go to the Cross to get to the Decree—you must go round by Redemption to get to Election—there is no other way.

III. In the third place let us see WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF ELECTION. Our text says, very plainly too, that the Apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians. How did he know it? The way by which the Apostle knew it must be the method by which you and I are to know our election of God, too.

We have known more than once in our day of some men who pretended to know their election by their impudence. They had got into their head the presumption that they were elected and though they lived on in sin and still did as they liked, they imagined they were God’s chosen. This is what I call presuming upon election by sheer impudence.

We know of others, alas, who have imagined themselves to be elect because of the visions that they have seen when they have been asleep or when they have been awake—for men have waking dreams—and they have brought these as evidences of their election. These are of as much value as cobwebs would be for a garment! They will be of as much service to you at the Day of Judgment as a thief’s convictions would be to him if he were in need of a character to commend him to mercy. You may dream long enough before you dream yourself into Heaven—and you may have as many stupid notions in your head as there are romances in your circulating libraries—but because they are in your head they are not, therefore, in God’s Book. We need a more sure word of testimony than this and if we have it not, God forbid that we should indulge our vain heart with the dainty thought that we are chosen of God!

I have heard of one who said in an alehouse that he could say more than any of the rest, that he was one of God’s children. Meanwhile he drank deeper into intoxication than the rest. Surely he might have said, with an emphasis, that he was one of the devil’s children—and he would have been correct. When immoral men and women who live constantly in sin, prate about being God’s children, we discern them at once. Just as we know a crab tree when we see the fruit hanging upon it, we understand what spirit these people are of when we see their walk and conversation. Oh, it is detestable—loathsome above all loathsomeness— to hear men whose characters in secret are infamous, and whose lives are destitute of every Christian virtue, boasting as though they had the keys of Heaven and could set up whomever they would, and pull down whomever they might please! Blessed be God, we are not under their domination, for a more terrific set of tyrants than they are, the world has never known! And a more frightful reign of vice than they would inaugurate if they had their way, I am sure villainy, itself, cannot conceive! “Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” If Divine Grace does not make us holy, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, it is not worth the having! Brothers and Sisters, if we are God’s elect we must have some substantial evidence to attest it!

According to our text, what are these evidences? They seem to be four. The first evidence appears to be the Word of God coming home with power. If you will turn to the verse, you will soon see how the Apostle says, “Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.” The Gospel is preached in the ears of all—it only comes with power to some. The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls. Nor does it lie in the preacher’s learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of man. The power which converts souls does not even lie in the preacher’s simplicity or adaptation to his work—that is a secondary agency, but not the cause. Again, the power which converts souls does not even lie in the pathos which the speaker may employ. Men may weep to the tragic muse in a theater as well as to prophetic strains in a chapel! Their creature passions may be impressed through the acting on the stage as well as by the utterance of God’s own servants! No, there is something more than this needed and where it is absent, all preaching is nothing! We might preach till our tongues rotted, till we should exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless there were the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit going with it, changing the will of man!

O Sirs! We might as well preach to stone walls as preach to humanity unless the Holy Spirit is with the Word to give it power to convert the soul! We are reminded of Mr. Rowland Hill, who once met a man in the street at night, not quite drunk, but almost so. The man said, “Mr. Hill, I am one of your converts.” “Yes,” he said, “I dare say you are one of mine—but if you were one of God’s, you would not be in the state in which you now are.” Our converts are worth nothing. If they are converted by man they can be unconverted by man! If some charm or power of one preacher can bring them to Christ, some charm or power of another preacher can take them from Christ. True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Spirit alone!

Well, then, my Hearers, did you ever, when listening to the Word, feel a Divine Power coming with it? Never mind where you were, whether in Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s Cathedral, in this Tabernacle, or at some special service at one of the theaters—the place matters nothing. “Well,” perhaps you will say, “I have felt some impression.” Ah, but that may be wiped away! Have you ever felt something coming with the Word which you could not understand. Which, while it wooed you and won your heart, smote you as though a sword had gone through you and that not with a flesh wound, but with a wound that divides between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow, as if the Truth of God were, as indeed it is, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts?

Those who are really God’s elect can tell a tale something like this. “There was a time when the Word was to me like a great ten thongedwhip—my shoulders were stripped bare and every time the Word was preached it seemed to make a gash within my soul! I trembled. I saw God in arms against me. I understood that I was in debt to His Justice and could not pay—that I was involved in a controversy against my Maker and could not conquer. I saw myself stripped naked to my shame, leprous from head to foot, a bankrupt and a felon ready to be given over to a traitor’s doom.” Truly the Word came with power to your soul. “And,” you continue, “I remember, too, when the Truth of God came home to my heart and made me leap for very joy, for it took all my load away—it showed me Christ’s power to save! I had known the Truth before, but now I felt it! I had understood that Christ could save, but now that fact came home to me! I went to Jesus just as I was—I touched the hem of His garment and I was made whole! I found now that the Word was not a fiction—that it was the one reality. I had listened scores of times and he that spoke was as one that played a tune upon an instrument—but now he seemed to be dealing with me, putting his hand right into my heart and getting hold of me. He brought me first to God’s Judgment Seat and there I stood and heard the thunders roll! Then he brought me to the Mercy Seat and I saw the blood sprinkled on it, and I went home triumphing because my sin was washed away.” Oh, again I ask you, did the Word over come home with this power to your souls?

Since the day of your conversion has the Word ever rebuked you? Has it sometimes cut down your hopes? Do you sometimes, after hearing a sermon, feel as if it had been like a great hurricane bearing right through the forest of your thoughts, cleaving its own course, and leaving many a dead thing that you thought alive swept down to the ground? Do you feel, too, when you go home from the sanctuary, as if God Himself had been there? You did not know what else it could be. It could not have been the speaker nor the words he uttered, but the very God came and looked into your eyes and searched the thoughts of your mind—and turned your heart upside down and then filled it full again with His love and with His light, with His truth and with His joy, with His peace and with His desire after holiness? Is it so with you? Where the Word is not with power to your souls, you lack the proof of Election.

Remember, I do not say that it will always be so. You must not expect that God will speak with you every time—in fact, the preacher himself fails often and is painfully conscious of it. How shall one man always speak without sometimes feeling that he, himself, is not in a fit frame to be God’s mouthpiece? But though it be a clown from the country, if he preaches God’s Word, the Spirit will go with it! It is not the clown, nor yet the archbishop that does the work—it is the Word of God that is quick and powerful! Your evidence of Election is blotted and blurred unless the Word has come to you with demonstration of the Spirit and with His Power. People come and hear sermons in this place and then they go out and say, “How did you like it”—as if that meant anything to anybody— “How did you like it?” And one says, “Oh, very well.” And another says, “Oh, not at all.” Do you think we live on the breath of your nostrils? Do you believe that God’s servants, if they are really His, care for what you think of them? No, verily, but if you should reply, “I enjoyed the sermon,” they are inclined to say, “Then we must have been unfaithful or else you would have been angry—we must surely have slurred over something or else the Word would have cut your conscience as with the jagged edges of a knife! You would have said, ‘I did not think how I liked it—I was thinking how I liked myself and about my own state before God. That was the matter that exercised me, not whether he preached well, but whether I stood accepted in Christ, or whether I was a castaway.’” My dear Hearers, are you learning to hear like that? If you are not, if going to church and to chapel are to you like going to a play, or like listening to some orator who speaks upon temporal matters, then you lack the evidence of Election—the Word has not come to your souls with power.

But there is yet a second evidence of Election. Those whom God has chosen receive the Word “in much assurance.” They do not all receive it with full assurance—that is a Grace they get afterwards—but they receive it with much assurance. There are some professors who go upon very strange principles. It is indeed somewhat difficult to know what principles are enforced and acknowledged in this age, for there are persons whose principles allow them to say black and white are the same thing! And there are certain persons whose religious principles are not much unlike this. They put a hymn book in their pockets when they are going to a meeting. They put a comic song book in their pockets when they are going somewhere else. They can hold with the hare and run with the hounds. Such people as these never have any very great confidence in their religion—and it is very proper that they should not—for their religion is not worth the time they spend in making a profession of it!

But the true Christian, when he gets hold of principles, keeps them and there is no mistake about the grip with which he maintains his hold of them. “Ah,” he says, “that Word which I have heard with my ears is the very Truth of God and it is true to me, real and substantial to me—and here I clasp it with both hands—with a clasp that neither time, nor tribulation, nor death shall ever cause me to let go.” To a Christian his religion is a part of himself—he believes the Truth of God not because he has been told it or taught it by mother or friend, but because it is true to him in his inmost soul. He is like the servant girl who, when she could not answer her infidel master, said, “Sir, I cannot answer you, but I have a something in here that would if it could speak.” There is “much assurance.”

Sinners who have once felt their need of a Savior feel very much assurance about His preciousness. And saints that have once found Him precious have very much assurance about His Divinity, about His Atonement, about His everlasting Love, about His immortal dignity as a Prophet, a Priest and a King. They are sure of it. I know some persons who say if a man speaks positively, he is dogmatic. Glorious old dogmatism, when will you come back to earth? It is these, “ifs,” and “buts,” and qualifications—these, “perhapses,” and “maybe sos” that have ruined our pulpits! Look at Luther when he stood up for the glory of his God—was there ever such a dogmatist? “I believe it,” he said, “and therefore I speak it.” From that day, when on Pilate’s staircase, he was trying to creep up and down the stairs to win Heaven, when the sentence out of the musty folio came before him, “Justified by faith we have peace with God,” that man was as sure that works could not save him as he was of his own existence! Now, if he had come out and said, “Gentlemen, I have a theory to propound that may be correct. Excuse my doing so,” and so on, the Papacy would have been dominant to this day! But he knew God had said it and he felt that that was God’s own way to his own soul—and he could not help being dogmatic with that glorious force of secession which soon laid his foes prostrate at his feet!

Now have you received the Gospel “with much assurance”? If you have and you can say, “Christ is mine. I trust in Him and though I may sometimes have doubts about my own interest in Him, yet I do know by experience in my soul that He is a precious Christ—I know not by ‘Paley’s Evidences’ nor by ‘Butler’s Analogy,’ but I know by my heart’s inward evidence. I know by the analogy of my own soul’s experience that the Truth of God which I have received is no cunningly devised fable, but something that came from God to draw my soul up to God”—that is another evidence of Election! If you have that, never mind the rest! I hardly care whether you believe the Doctrine of Election or not—you are elect. As I have sometimes told a Brother who has denied the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, when I have seen his holy life, “Never mind, my Brother, you will persevere to the end and you will prove the Doctrine that you do not believe! You may not be able to receive the Doctrine I now preach, but if such has been your experience, when you get to Heaven you will wake up and say, ‘Well, I am one of the elect! I made a deal of fuss about it while on the earth, but I will make a deal of music about it now that I have got to Heaven. And I will sing more sweetly and loudly than all the rest, ‘Unto Him that has loved me and washed me from my sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever!’”

But there is a third evidence. Those who are chosen of the Lord desire to be like Him. “You became followers of us and of the Lord,” the Apostle says in the text—by which he does not mean that they said, “I am of Paul, I am of Silas, I am of Timothy”—but that they imitated Paul so far as he imitated Christ. Thomas aˆ Kempis wrote a book about the imitation of Christ and a blessed book in some respects it is. But I would like the Holy Spirit to write in your hearts the imitation of Christ. It shall be to you a sweet proof that you are chosen of God. Are you Christlike or do you want to be? Can you forgive your enemy and can you love him and do him good? Can you say tonight, “I am no more any man’s enemy than is the baby that is just born”? And do you now desire to live unselfishly, to live for others, to live for God? Are you prayerful? Do you come to God in prayer as Jesus did? Are you careful of your words and of your acts as Christ was? I do not ask you if you are perfect, but I do ask whether you follow the Perfect One! We are to be followers of Christ, if not with equal steps, still with steps that would be equal if they could! If we follow Christ, that will be to others one of the surest proofs of our election, though perhaps to ourselves, if we are humble-minded, it will be no proof, since we shall rather see our blemishes than our virtues and mourn over our sins more than we rejoice in our Graces. If a man follows not Christ, those who look on may be safe enough in concluding that, whatever he may say about election, and however much he may prate about it, he is not the Lord’s. On that point I shall not say anything more because I have already enlarged upon it in a former part of the discourse.

In the last place I will say the fourth evidence is the existence of spiritual joy in spiritual service. If you look further, it seems that those of whose election the Apostle was sure, received the Word of God “in much affliction,” but, “with joy in the Holy Spirit.” What do you say about this, you whose religion consists of a slavish attendance upon forms that you detest? Look how many there are who go to a place of worship just because it is not respectable to stay away, but who often wish it were! And when many of your Christians get to the Continent, where is the Sabbath with them, then? Where is then their care for God’s House? See, too, with what misery some people at home go up to the House of the Lord. Why? Because they have come to regard it as a place where they ought to be very solemn. It is not a home to them—it is a prison. How different it is with your children when they come home for their holidays! How do they come into their father’s house? Dull, demure, as if they could not speak? No, bless their little hearts, they come running up to their father’s knees, so glad to be there, so glad to be home! That is how a man whose religion is his delight comes up to the House of the Lord. He feels that it is his Father’s House. He would be reverent, for his Father is God, but he must be happy, for God is his Father!

See again the Christian when he goes to his closet to pray. Ungodly persons will not go there at all. Or, if they do, it is because they want to win Heaven by it. But look, they go through their dreary prayers—and what a dreary thing it must be for a man to pray when he never expects to be heard and when he has no spirit of prayer! It is like a horse going round a mill grinding for somebody else and never getting any farther— doing the same tomorrow, the same the day after, and ever on and on. Sometimes as the little church bells sound in the morning in certain churches to fetch people out—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday there are some persons to be found there for early prayers—and they go to evening prayers, too, and a very good thing this would be if those who attend went there with holy joy! But there is the sexton and he says it is a great trouble to be always opening the doors like that when nobody comes except three old women that have got almshouses and two that expect them and are, therefore, there. Do you think that an acceptable service to God? But they who go because they would not stay away if they could—they who worship God because it is an instinct and a pleasure, a holy thing and honorable—these are men and women who delight in God’s Word and they give the best evidence of being chosen of God!

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, who make your faces miserable that you may appear unto men to fast! Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that reads the heart asks not that your head may hang down like a bulrush, but that you may do deeds of mercy and walk humbly with your God! And you who can delight yourselves in your God shall have the desires of your heart! You that rejoice in the Lord, always, and triumph in His name shall go from strength to strength, and going at last to Glory, you shall find that you are there as the result of His Divine Purpose and Decree—and you shall give Him all the praise!

But now, I think I hear some say, “Oh, I want to know whether I am elect. I cannot say that the Word ever came to me with power. I cannot say I received it in much assurance. I cannot say I am a follower of Christ. I cannot say I have received the Word with joy.” Well, dear Beloved, then leave that question alone! Instead of that, let me ask another, “Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you now trust Christ to save your souls?” He will do it, if, just as you are, whoever you may be, you will come to Christ and give yourself up to Him to save you, to have you, to hold you for better, for worse, in life and through death. The moment you believe, you are saved! That act of faith, through the precious blood of Christ, will put away your every sin! You will not begin to be saved—you are saved. You will not be put into a salvable condition, but you shall be saved the moment you believe—completely and perfectly saved! “Oh,” says one, “I would I could trust Christ.” Say you so? “Whoever will, let him take,” let him trust Christ. God help you now to do it! Trust Jesus and you are saved! This is addressed to every one of you without exception, for, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” The Lord help you to trust Jesus and then you may go on your way with joy, “knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
*1Co 9:22-27***.**

The Apostle Paul is here giving a description of the way in which he made everything help toward the fulfillment of his desire to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He longed to be the means of winning souls. He desired that at the last his Master might be able to say to him, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.” And, therefore, everything with which he had to do was made to bend in that direction.

22-24. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. Know you not that they which run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? No matter if 20 or a hundred had entered the race, “but one receives the prize.” Alas, out of these who appear to be running in the Christian ministry, how many will be prize-takers at the last? And out of those who seem to be running the race of the Christian life, how many will win the prize? Ah, Lord, You know!

24. So run that you may obtain. Do not speculate about what others will do, or not do, but see to your own running—“So run that you may obtain.” Salvation is all of Grace, but when a man is saved, he still has to run the Christian race and to be a runner as long as he lives.”

25. And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Here Paul is alluding to the athletic games and pugilistic encounters of the time. It was a matter of common notoriety that every man who was going to fight, or wrestle, or run, had to get himself into proper condition—to “go into training,” as we say in similar cases nowadays.

25. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we for an incorruptible crown. The athletes who completed in the Grecian games passed through great self-denials and mortifications of the flesh in order that every part of their bodily frame might be tough and strong when they came forward to wrestle, or to run, or to fight. “Now,” says Paul, “if they do all that to gain a crown of parsley”—which was generally the crown given—truly, “a corruptible grown”—“how much more ought we to do in order to win a crown that fades not away—‘an incorruptible crown’”!

26. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air. He would not leave a stone unturned, as it were, that he might gain the prize. He put out all his strength in the name of the Lord.

27. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection. The Greek word, according to some, implies getting his body into the same position as a man does when, in a sport encounter, he gets his adversary’s head under his arm and smites him with all his might. So Paul says concerning his body, “I bring it into subjection and take care that it feels the full force of my will.” According to other interpreters, the verse may be read, “I drag my body off as a slave”—just as in some of those ancient fights, the victors dragged away their antagonists as slaves, Paul accounted his body to be as a slave to his soul and dragged it behind him in chains.

27. Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. The Greek word which is translated, “a castaway,” is, “adokimos.” It might better have been rendered, “disapproved.” It certainly has no such meaning as that which has been generally given to it. Paul was not afraid of being cast away by God at the last! What he aimed at was this—as he had entered the lists, as a Christian minister, to fight for Christ, to wrestle against principalities and powers, to seek to win souls for Christ, he must keep his bodily powers and passions so in subjection that, at the last, when the prizes were distributed, he would be found to have won his. This is quite another matter from being “a castaway” from salvation and eternal life! Paul was saved and he knew it—and some of us know, to a certainty, that we are saved—but we also know that there is another crown to be won which the Lord will give to His servants who win in the great fight with sin. To win this crown is our high ambition and we long to hear the Master say to each one of us, in that day, “Well done, you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #648 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

*‘I feelI must, I shall, decline,   
And prove like them at last.’*Draw me not away with the wicked.”

4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.* And a just mind feels that such ought to be the case. God is a Judge and He will punish sin—and gracious men do not wish that it should be otherwise. Even to that terrible side of God’s Character which is seen in His vengeance upon the ungodly, the Christian turns the loving eye. He is not reconciled to half a god, or to a god with half the attributes of God, namely, love and tenderness, but he loves God as he finds Him. He loves that God who is a consuming fire! I would be afraid if I could not love God under any aspect in which He is presented to me, because just as I would feel that I did not love a man truly if I said, “In such a character I cannot endure him,” I would feel that there was some difference between him and me. We must love God in *every*Character—upon the Throne of Justice, as well as upon the Seat of Love.

5, 6. *Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build themup. Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplications.* Can you say this? Excuse me putting the question again and again to all now present, for it is a very vital question. If you never knew what answered prayer means, God help you to begin to pray, “Blessed be the Lord, because He has heard the voice of my supplications.”

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÷Col 3.13

DIVINE FORGIVENESS ADMIRED AND IMITATED  
NO. 1841

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”** *Col 3:13***.**

To whom is this exhortation addressed? The Apostle told us in the 12th verse—“Elect of God, holy and beloved.” Here are three particulars. They are, first of all, “elect of God,” that is to say, chosen according to His eternal purpose. They are made choice ones by being thus chosen. Next, they are sanctified by the Spirit of God and are, therefore, called “holy”—this holiness appertaining to their persons and their pursuits, their calling and their conversation. When the Spirit of God has fully done His work, He sheds abroad in their hearts the love of God, so that experimentally they feel themselves to be “beloved.” To abide in the love of God is the fruit of election and the result of holiness. If any of you can, with humble confidence, claim these three titles, “elect of God, holy and beloved,” you are among the most favored of all mankind! The Father has made of you a special choice! In you His Holy Spirit has worked a special work and you possess, within your souls, the special joy of living in the love of God! “Elect of God, holy and beloved”—it is as you enjoy these three things that you will find it easy to carry out the precept which is now set before you, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”

Note in our text, before we proceed to the full discussion of it, what an honor this Scripture puts upon our Lord Jesus Christ. In Eph 4:32 a similar precept is placed in a rather different form, for it runs thus— “Even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.” Here, as if to show the true and proper equality of the Christ with God, it is written, “Even as Christ forgave you.” In the Revised Version they read, “even as the Lord forgave you,” but they place in the margin, “Many ancient authorities read Christ.” In that case we see that Lord and Christ were interchangeable terms when those ancient authorities were alive. None can forgive sins but God. He alone forgives against whom the sin is committed. Sin, therefore, being against Christ and Christ being able to forgive it, we see that He is exalted on high to give remission of sins. He shares in the high and royal prerogative of God, seeing He is able to forgive sin.

Does not this expression seem to say that albeit the Apostle and other inspired writers had many things to write of, yet one thing was always upon their hearts, namely, to honor their Lord? Is not this a proof of how thoroughly they were under the influence of the Spirit of God, of whom Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me”? Whatever He is teaching, whatever duty He is enforcing, whatever promise He is delivering, the Holy Spirit takes care to do it so that the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted in the hearts of His people! Let us, in our hearts, adore the Anointed One, Christ Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God—and never let us hesitate to honor the Son even as we honor the Father. Let us, as penitents, adore the pardoning Savior, seeing He has power to forgive sins and has cleansed the myriads of His redeemed from all their iniquities.

But, Brothers and Sisters, while this gives glory to Christ, what a weight is lent to the precept, since it is supported by the example and the authority of our Divine Lord—“Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” What a model is set before us! How perfect is that spirit of love which we are to manifest! Even as Christ forgave us, we are bid to forgive others. What nobler pattern could have been chosen? Surely He that trifles with this precept, or thinks it one that is left to our option—to obey or to neglect—cannot rightly know the dignity of the Christ in whose pierced hands this Law is held forth before our eyes! Depend upon it, this command, so wondrously linked with the Person of the pardoning Christ, is of no common importance. If the Law given by Moses was so solemnly binding, what shall we say of this Law which is embodied in the life of the Lord Jesus?

Surely I shall scarcely need to plead with you, who are His disciples, that you give your heart’s best attention to such teaching! Your Lord, Himself, stands before you! You remember how He forgave you all your trespasses? Then I am sure you will give earnest heed to His exhortation to forgive. May the dove-like Spirit now brood over this assembly and create love in all our bosoms.

Two things are to be done. First, let us study the pattern of forgiveness here set before us. And then, secondly, let us copy it for ourselves in our forgiveness of those who trespass against us.

I. Carefully STUDY THE PATTERN OF FORGIVENESS set before us in the text. “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” What is this forgiveness of Christ? You know how He exhibited it in His daily life. He was much tried, but He was never provoked to wrath. Both by friends and by enemies He was made to suffer, yet He neither accused the one nor the other to His great Father. He never reviled those who reviled Him, but patiently yielded to their malice, giving His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. His disciples He gently rebuked, but He never spoke to them in anger. A life of forgiveness was crowned by His dying prayer for His persecutors, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” He loved His enemies. He lived for His enemies. He died for His enemies. He was Incarnate gentleness, the mirror and paragon of forgiveness.

Observe, also, that He forgave offenses most great and grievous. It was a horrible thing that when the Lord Jesus came into the world, moved by pure love, He was not welcomed, but Herod sought to slay the young Child. Afterwards, when He appeared publicly among men, the Jews took up stones to stone Him. He was treated with contumely. His miracles were ascribed to the devil and His holy and unspotted Character was traduced by His being called a drunk and a winebibber. He was the firstborn of the Lord of the vineyard, but when the husbandmen saw Him, they said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.” You know with what scornful cruelty they treated Him in the hour of His passion. What could the malice of Hell have invented more contemptuous and cruel than that which men used towards the Well-Beloved? Had He been the basest of beings, His sufferings would have been too cruel. Men did all they could against Him.

Say not that you have never thus transgressed. Oh, Sirs, we, also, have crucified Him, for our sins were laid upon Him by Jehovah. We, also, must confess, “He was despised and we esteemed Him not.” There was a time when we, who are now His followers, once “hid, as it were, our faces from Him.” He called us, but we gave Him no answer! He wooed us, but we were blind to His beauties! We can never remember this without deep emotions of regret. We used no other friend so evilly. We crucified Him and slew Him, as far as we were able to do it, by our rejection of His love. And yet He has forgiven us! He is ready to forgive all such as seek His face. Oh, the splendor of that love which blots out sins like ours! What a flood of Grace is this which rises above the tops of the mountains of our sins and covers them forever!

It matters not how black or crimson our transgressions may have been, the moment we come to Jesus He makes us whiter than snow! He puts away the most horrible of offenses, the most glaring of transgressions in a moment! He says, “I forgive you. Go and sin no more”—and we, then and there—receive a perfect pardon! I would that all of you who have never sought that Grace would be induced by this blessed fact to come with all your sins and receive immediate absolution from the hand of your Lord!

Remember, also, to increase your wonderment at His forgiveness, that these offenses which were committed against Christ were altogether wanton and unprovoked. He could demand of His adversaries, “For which of those works do you stone Me?” Towards no man had He acted unjustly or even harshly. He had been all tenderness and lowliness in every place towards all sorts of men—and yet certain men became incensed against Him because of His goodness! Did they refuse to love Him because He was altogether lovely? Did they despise Him because He was so truly great? Such is the depravity of the human heart, that the very virtues of Christ provoked the hostility of men! What has my Lord Christ ever done against any of you? Why do you refuse Him?

I have heard many a man say, “If I had done anything whatever to provoke this ill-will, I could account for it, but they persecute me wrongfully.” It was pre-eminently so in the case of our Lord, who says in the Psalm, “They hated Me without a cause.” Yet He forgave this wanton malice! He continues to forgive such causeless wrong. With His own blood, He blots out horrible insults against Himself, His people, His Gospel and His love. Even you who oppose His Kingdom and refuse His service shall be, at once, forgiven, if you will bow your hearts before Him and accept that rich mercy which His hand is so ready to bestow! See what a pattern is here of the passing-by of the greatest and most malicious offenses! How can hatred live in the Presence of such love?

Christ has shown this pardon to the most unworthy persons. Of all whom He forgave when He was here below, none deserved such kindness. In fact, to talk of deserving forgiveness is a contradiction in terms! Certainly in me—and I have no doubt in you, my Brothers and Sisters—who have tasted of His infinite mercy, there was no presence of claim to His mercy in our cases. If He had left us in our sin. If He had passed by us and allowed us to perish, what complaint could we have brought against Him? Since He loved us and forgave us, it must have been because of something within Himself—it could not have been from anything in us! We are unworthy, but He is gracious—and herein He teaches us to pardon the most provoking and worthless of those who trespass against us.

Be it never forgotten that He always had the power to have executed vengeance upon any one of us if He had been pleased to do so. Some men pardon because they cannot punish—they are too weak to execute vengeance and, therefore, they refrain from it. Half the forgiveness in the world comes from a feeble hand rather than from a forgiving heart. But the Christ could have crushed His adversaries in a moment if He had willed it, and yet He freely forgave! When they said, “Come down from the Cross”— suppose He had instantly loosed the nails and leaped among them—where had they been, then? They would have begged the rocks to fall upon them and the mountains to cover them from His face if He had but manifested the glory of His power! But He was not provoked to leave the Cross, or to break the silence of His passion by so much as a rebuke. Mercy was stored like honey in His heart and pardon dropped its sweetness from His lips.

The Lord has been greatly long-suffering with ourselves when a breath might have destroyed us. We might easily have been destroyed in accidents which befell us, or we might have died in our various sicknesses and so have sunk to the lowest Hell. But instead of slaying us, our Lord even interposed to spare us—to spare us when our life was rebellion! When He could so easily have blotted out our lives, He did not do so, but in boundless mercy blotted out our sins. Let us magnify His amazing Grace and imitate it in our lives.

I want you, for a moment, to consider the question, How did He forgive? The manner of our Lord’s forgiveness is as noteworthy as the pardon, itself. The Lord Jesus came and pardoned us when that act of Grace was unsolicited! Before we had thought of mercy, He had thoughts of mercy toward us! I remember reading in one of our magazines a story of a city missionary who discovered a poor girl who had wandered from the ways of virtue. He had sought to restore her to a better life. He spoke with her till she became somewhat tender of heart. He enquired about her family and learned that she had once enjoyed a happy home and had known a tender father’s love. “But he would never look at me now,” she said. “I am sure he never would—I am such a degraded creature that I could not venture near his door.” “Have you never written to him?” “No, I could not write to him. It would be of no use. I could not expect him to send me an answer and it would break my heart to be refused.”

“We will try,” said the good man, “we will write to him.” He wrote to the father and the next post brought back an answer, with the word, “Immediate,” written upon the envelope. The sum of the letter enclosed within was, “Ready to forgive.” She was taken to her father. She was soon locked in his embrace. All was forgiven—the wanderer was restored! Notice that her father had been praying for her, night and day, ever since she left his roof—and he had longed to receive her to his home again. Her seeking his forgiveness did not cause it—it was in his heart long before—and no doubt it was because of his cries and tears that God, in mercy, touched his girl’s heart and brought her home. O Sinner, before you think of Christ, He has thoughts of love towards you! He says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you.” The forgiveness is first and the returning to the Lord is urged as a consequence of that forgiveness! Pardon is not first in the matter of our personal experience, but it is first as matter of fact with God. Oh! the mercy of the Lord Christ, that before we know our sin, He has made atonement for it by His own precious blood!

The Lord Jesus Christ is to be held up as an example of pardoning love for the true and hearty way in which He forgives sin. Forgiveness, when it comes from human lips in measured, studied phrases, is not worth having, for the heart is not in it, or it would be more free and joyful. The Lord Jesus Christ absolves sinners with all His heart. He never acts in a cold, formal manner. Never does He outwardly forgive and in secret retain His wrath—but wholly, entirely, joyfully, He puts away the sin of those whom He forgives—and puts it away forever! When He forgives, He forgives the whole of our faults, follies, failures and offenses. There is a certain solidarity about sin, so that it makes up one lump. I read the other day of a certain theologian speaking of Christ having put away original sin while He left actual sin. Nonsense! Sin is one and indivisible! Iniquity is not to be done up in separate parcels. The sin, the iniquity of men, is spoken of in the Bible as one thing. Although we sin multitudes of times, the various streams all flow into one sea of evil—when sin is forgiven, all sin is put away—not a shred, nor fragment, nor particle remains! The Lord Jesus drowns all the hosts of sin in the depths of the sea and the whole of our guilt is swallowed up forever. This is great forgiveness, indeed! Glory be to Him who gives it! Let us follow Him in His truth and heartiness.

This forgiveness, again, is given by the Lord Jesus Christ in the most complete possible manner. He keeps no back reckonings. He retains no reserves of anger. He so forgives that He forgets. That is the wonder of it! He says, “I will not remember your sins.” He casts them behind His back—they are wholly and completely gone from His observation or regard. Alas, such is poor human nature that even fathers, when they have forgiven a wayward child, will, perhaps, throw the offense in his teeth years after when he again offends. But it is never so with Christ. He says, “Your sins shall not be mentioned against you any more, forever.” He has done with the sins of His people in so effectual a way that not a whisper concerning them shall ever come from His mouth so as to grieve them. They will, themselves, remember their sins with deep repentance, but the Lord will never challenge them on account of their past rebellions. Blessed be the name of Christ for such complete forgiveness as this!

The Lord Jesus Christ forgives His people in a continuous manner. He forgave us long ago—He still forgives us. He does not forgive and afterwards accuse. His forgiveness is eternal. It is not a reprieve He gives to you, believing ones, but a free pardon, under the King’s hand and seal, which shall effectually protect you from accusation and punishment. “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” He has finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. Send to Hell a pardoned sinner?! It were a contradiction to the very nature of God! Condemn those for whom Jesus died?! Why, the Apostle mentions that death as a conclusive answer to the challenge, “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” How shall He intercede for us and yet accuse us? It is impossible for Christ to be both Redeemer and Condemner to the same persons. So perfect is His pardon that our sin has ceased to be! He has put away sin forever by the sacrifice of Himself.

Greatly do I admire the very gracious way in which that pardon is given. Some people offer forgiveness in an ungracious way. They make it appear that they are coming down from such awful heights when they forgive a fellow mortal. In great dignity they march down in state from their own splendid innocence to the poor Brother who has done them a wrong—as good as saying, “I will condescend to do this, though it is an awful stoop for such an angelic being as I am.” You never feel that about the Christ, for He places His pardon down so low that He seems to say, “Receive My mercy, I beg you to receive it.” He speaks as if He were favored by a sinner’s accepting His forgiveness! He humbles Himself and never scalds a sinner with scornful pity.

Though the Christ condescends more than all the condescensions of all men put together, “for worms were never raised so high above their meanest fellow worms,” yet the condescension is so real and royal that there is no ostentation in it! He is born to the manner—He condescends naturally, like condescension’s own self. Some are most proud when they stoop, but Jesus graciously seems to put Himself on a level with us, yes, and even to go lower than we are, that He may lift us up! Admire as much the way in which Christ forgives as the forgiveness which He bestows. It breaks my heart to think what a loving Christ He was to me when I sought His forgiveness. Truly, “He gives liberally and upbraids not”—He frowned and thundered when I looked to my own righteousness—but when I turned to His Gospel of Free Grace, I had from Him not even a hard word—He was all love and tenderness to me, the chief of sinners!

Above all, the greatness of His forgiveness is seen in the fact that the offense had brought great trouble into the world and He bore that trouble. The sinner, by his wrong doing, had subjected himself to great loss and calamity. Now, when we forgive a person who has done us a wrong, we say, “I freely forgive you, but you have involved yourself in certain consequences which you will have to bear, and out of these I cannot help you.” Our blessed Master seemed to say, Sinner, you have sinned yourself under the curse of God. You have sinned yourself into misery and into death—and as the proof that I do freely forgive you—I will take all this suffering and this death upon Myself. You have done the wrong wantonly and wickedly, but I will bear the consequences. You have knotted the whips, but they shall scourge My shoulders. You have sharpened the nails, but they shall pierce My hands and feet. You have put yourself under curse and penalty, but I will bear the curse of death that you may be free.”

Was there ever mercy like this? Do not all who know this love accept it gladly? Sinner, do you not know this? Have you never heard about it? Know you not that the Lord, even Jesus, the Son of God, is able to forgive you all your trespasses—that it will be a joy to His heart to do so—and to do it at once? Oh, that before that clock shall strike again you may be able to say, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation, for Christ has put away my sin.” This is not according to the manner of men—it is Godlike! It is a sure proof that Jesus is the Son of God, for who could act like this but One who is Himself the Son of God?

Thus have I set before you, in my poor way, this great forgiveness and the manner of it. I trust you have had an experience of it. Assuredly we all need such forgiveness—do any of you deny it? May the Holy Spirit open your blind eyes and melt your hard hearts. According to the text, those who have received pardon know that they have it, for Paul speaks positively—“Even as Christ forgave you”—as if it were a matter of fact well known among the people of God. There is a theory abroad that we may be forgiven and not know it—that Jesus may forgive and we may never discover it until we come to our dying moments. That is a wretched kind of Gospel! By the true Gospel we may know we are forgiven and be sure of it—surer than if we saw, written by the autograph of Christ, the words—“I have forgiven you.” The eyes may deceive, but the witness of the Spirit of God within the heart can never delude us! If you believe that Jesus is the Christ and if you are resting, alone, on Him, your sins, which are many, are forgiven you, “for the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” In knowing that we are forgiven by Christ, let us be clear and decided in our forgiveness of others—not only in word—but in deed and in truth let us exhibit a forbearing spirit.

II. You see your example. Our second word is, COPY IT FOR YOURSELVES. If the Holy Spirit enables you to write according to this copy, you will have the approval of the Lord resting upon you. See how large and clear the letters are! It will be no small success if you can reproduce them. “Even as Christ forgave you”—the imitation should be as exact as possible. Mark the, “even,” and the, “so,” and endeavor to keep up with your gracious Lord.

Notice, however, in the text, that this precept concerning the imitation of Christ in forgiveness is universally applicable. The text is not long, but see how unqualified is its range. “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any.” You see it is not put that superiors are to forgive inferiors, or, on the other hand, that the less are to forgive the greater—but the circle of the command includes the whole! It is, “forbearing one another.” The rich are to be forbearing to the poor. The poor are to be forbearing to the rich. The elderly man is to forgive the junior for his imprudence. The junior is to bear with the petulance and slowness of the elder. It is an all-round business, implying that one of these days I shall have to forgive you and you will have to forgive me!

Personally, I tax your forbearance to put up with me and I need not say that, sometimes, I have need to exercise forbearance towards one and another in so large a Church! We have all our own angles and edges and these are apt to come into contact with others. We are all pieces of one puzzle and shall fit in with each other one day and make a complete whole. But just now we seem misshapen and unfitting. Our corners need to be rounded. Sometimes they are chipped off by collision with somebody else and that is not comfortable for the person with whom we collide. Like pebbles in the river of the Water of Life, we are wearing each other round and smooth as the living current brings us into communion—everybody is polishing and being polished—and in the process it is inevitable that some present inconvenience should be sustained. But nobody must mind it, for it is part of a great process by which we shall all come into proper shape and be made meet for endless fellowship.

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another”—you see it has two sides. “Ah,” says one, “I cannot understand it. People ought to be far more forbearing to me.” Just so, but the first point is that you should be forgiving towards them. What numbers of Church members think that the duties of a Church are all one-sided. “I was ill and nobody came to see me.” “Did you send for anybody to see you?” “No, I did not.” Brother, before you find fault, remember your own fault—you have violated the command, “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church.” “But nobody exhibits Christian love,” says one. Is that true of yourself? I have noticed that the man who says that love is dead is usually rather short of love, himself. How very different the Church looks to different eyes—one sees a thousand virtues to admire—and another a world of evil to expose! One gratefully cries, “When I was ill, the dear Brethren came to see me so often that I had to ask them not to stay very long.” Another grumbles, “I might have laid there a month and nobody would ever have come near me.” We understand the reason for this difference—the tone of the speech is the key to the riddle. As a rule, with what measure we mete, it is measured to us. I do not find Christ’s people to be one half so faulty as I am, myself. I meet with many Christians whom I think it an honor to know and commune with—and those of another sort are useful to me as warnings and as fields for exercising my Graces. The forgiveness and the forbearance are needed all round and we must both give and take. By the sweet love of Jesus, let us not fail in this business.

Let me say, here, that this matter is an absolutely essential one— this forbearance and this forgiveness are vital. Be not deceived, God is not mocked! No man is a child of God who has not a likeness to God and no man is forgiven who will not, himself, forgive. In the Middle Ages a certain baron had a feud with another nobleman and determined to avenge himself for some insult, real or imaginary. His enemy was to pass by the castle with a small retinue and, therefore, the baron determined to waylay him and kill him, or, at least, to punish him severely and exact a ransom. A holy man who lived in the castle begged and entreated the baron to forbear from bloodshed and make peace. But, for some time, he pleaded in vain. The baron would not be appeased, but swore that he would be avenged of his adversary. So this godly man begged one favor of him, namely, that he would come with him into the chapel and offer prayer before he sallied forth.

They knelt together in prayer and before they rose the saintly man said, “My lord, repeat after me the Lord’s Prayer.” He went on saying, word by word, as the other did, till he came to that, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” There the good man stopped and said, “I charge you not to say this unless you really mean it! Do not mock the Lord! You may not go out and fight if you thus speak with God. You will have to appear before God and be judged for your sins, for you will not be forgiven if you do not forgive. Choose, then, either to utter this prayer and forgive and be saved, or to refuse the prayer and go forth to battle and be lost.” The baron paused and bit his lips but, at last his better spirit prevailed and he cried, “I cannot renounce my hope of Heaven! I cannot renounce my hope of forgiveness! Therefore my enemy shall pass by my castle in safety and I will say, ‘Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.’”

Do not attempt to deceive God! If you must lie and cheat, practice your impositions upon your fellow men, but do not imagine that you can flatter your Maker or deceive the Omniscient One! If you will not forgive, say so, and expect eternal perdition! But if you profess to be a Christian, obey this great and essential precept and forgive as Christ forgave you! Be honest, be straight with God, for He will be honest and straight with you. But if you cannot and will not forgive, then look forward to a portion with the tormentors, for even the loving Jesus says, “Neither shall My heavenly Father forgive you.”

In urging you to this copying of Christ, let me notice that this forgiveness of those who offend against us is gloriously ennobling. We are not asked to perform a duty which will, in the least, degrade us. Revenge is paltry—forgiveness is great-minded. Was not David infinitely greater than Saul when he spared his life in the cave and when he would not kill him as he lay asleep on the battlefield? Did not the king humble himself before David when he perceived David’s forbearance? If you would be the greatest among men, bear injuries with the greatest gentleness! If you would win the noblest of conquests, subdue yourself! To win a battle is a little thing if it is fought out with sword and gun. But to win it in God’s way, with no weapons but love, patience and forgiveness—this is the most glorious of victories! Blessed is that man who is more than a conqueror because he inflicts no wounds in the conflict, but overcomes evil with good! In the process of such a conquest the warrior is, himself, a gainer.

A nation in fighting, even if it wins the campaign, has to suffer great expense and loss of life. But he that overcomes by love is the better and stronger man through what he has done. He comes out of the conflict not only victor over his adversary, but victor over sin within himself—and all the readier for future war against evil. He glorifies God and, he, himself, becomes strong in Divine Grace. Nothing is more glorious than love! Your Master, who is King of kings, set you an example of gaining glory by enduring wrong. If you would be knights of His company, imitate His graciousness.

Notice that this imitation of Christ is logically appropriate to you all. Brothers and Sisters, if Christ has forgiven you, the parable we read just now shows that it is imperative that you should forgive your fellows. If our Lord has forgiven us our 10,000 talents, how can we take our brother by the throat for the 100 pence and say, “Pay me what you owe”? If we are, indeed, members of Christ, should we not be like our Head? If we profess to be His servants, are we to pretend to a dignity greater than our Master, who washed His disciples’ feet? If He forgave so freely, how dare we call ourselves His brethren if our spirit is hard and malice lingers within us?

I say, to conclude, that this copying of Christ is most forcibly sustained by the example given in the text. We are to forbear and to forgive. “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” I have heard it said, “If you pass by every wanton offense and take no notice of it, you will come to be despised and regarded as a person of mean spirit—your honor demands vindication.” When Christ forgave you, did His honor suffer by that forgiveness? You transgressed most wickedly and yet He forgave you—do you regard Him as less honorable because of that readiness to pass by offenses? Far from it—it is His Glory to forgive! The hallelujahs of saints and the songs of angels are sent up to His Throne the more heartily because of the richness of His Grace and the freeness of His mercy! Dishonor, indeed! What pride it is on the part of such poor creatures as we are to talk about our honor! Where is the honor of revenge? It is a dishonorable thing to put yourself on the level of him who injures you.

A heathen philosopher used to say, “If an ass kicks you, is it necessary for the maintenance of your honor to kick that ass, also?” That speech looks like a noble one, but yet it is too much flavored with contempt. When you speak, or even think of another who has wronged you as though he were only worthy to be regarded as a beast, you are not right in spirit—a degree of evil remains in your heart. Think of the offender without contempt as well as without resentment! Believe that he is a brother worth winning. Say, “If he does me an injury, for that very reason I will do him a double service. My only vengeance shall be double love. I will not allow myself to even think harshly of him. I will put the best possible construction on all that he does and thus show that the spirit of Christ is in me, conquering the spirit of fallen humanity both in me and in him.”

Says one, “If we always overlook offenses, other people may also be tempted to do us wrong.” Our text furnishes us with a ready answer to this. The Lord Jesus Christ forgave you. Have you met anybody who has been tempted to do wrong because the Lord has forgiven you? He has freely forgiven myriads of poor unworthy sinners and has that promoted sin? No. Is it not the very groundwork and case of holiness in the world, that Jesus is so gracious as to pardon sin? Why, then, should your forbearance do harm? Do not pretend to be so very wise, for therein you censure your Master! You are not the ruler of the world. It is not for you to be refraining from good for fear that evil may come of it—attend to your own ways—forgive everyone his brother his trespasses and leave consequences with God.

“Oh, but,” says one, “I know several pious persons who are very unforgiving.” You do not know any really good man who is of that character! I make bold to say that no man is really good if he has not a forgiving spirit. Unwillingness to forgive is a grievous flaw in anyone’s character. But if there were such good people, what have you to do with them? Is the servant to imitate his fellow servant, especially in his faults? The example set before you is, “Even as Christ forgave you.” You have nothing to do with either saints or sinners in this matter! Your Lord says to you, “What is that to you? Follow Me.” Perhaps you do not know all the story which you think proves that a good man has been unforgiving—and if you do know it, you are no judge of others. Mind your own business and even “as Christ forgave you, so also do you.”

Bur I hear another one saying, “These persons would not have forgiven me.” Just so, but then you are a child of God—you are, “elect, holy and beloved.” You are not to lower your standard to that of publicans and sinners. Does not Christ continually say, “What do you more than others? Do not even the publicans and the sinners the same?” “If you love them that love you, what thanks have you?” But if you love them that despitefully use you, then blessed are you when men shall persecute you! In that case you have an opportunity of showing your love to your Lord. When Dr. Duff first read to some young Brahmins in the Government school the precept, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,” one of the Brahmins cried out with delight, “Beautiful! Beautiful! This must have come from the true God. I have been told to love those that love me and I have not always done that—but to love my enemies is a Divine thought.” That young man became a Christian under the influence of that precept. Do not darken this Light of God , but be sure to display it in your life, that many may be attracted to Christ by its luster. Let your goodwill go forth even to the worst of men, for Christ’s sake. Forget their evil as you behold His goodness.

“Well,” says one, “I would forgive the fellow, but he does not deserve it.” That is why you are to forgive him! If he deserved it, you would be bound to do him the justice which he could claim. But, as he does not deserve it, you have, here, an appeal to your Christian love. Does not your heavenly Father give good things to the unthankful and to the evil? Did not Jesus forgive the undeserving when He forgave you? Does He not overlook our wretched characters when He has mercy upon us?

I hear one say, “I cannot forgive!” That is a terrible confession. The Apostle of the Gentiles said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Is not the same strength available for you? Some persons find forgiving and forgetting to be hard work, but, as you are bound to do it, or stay out of Heaven, you must cry to God for help and set about it with determination. If you are, indeed, a child of God, you will soon find the difficulty gone. Indeed, forgiveness will become easy to you! To be forgiven is such sweetness that honey is tasteless in comparison with it! But there is one thing still sweeter—and that is to forgive. As it is more blessed to give than to receive, so to forgive rises a stage higher in experience than to be forgiven. To be forgiven is, as it were, the root—to forgive is the flower. That Divine Spirit, who bears witness with our spirit when He breathes peace into us because we are pardoned, bears yet a higher witness with us when He enables us to truly pardon all manner of trespasses against ourselves!

Let it never be said, in a Christian Church, that members bear a grudge against one another. I do not know that it is so in your case—assuredly it should not be so anywhere. Let it not be said of any Christian man that he is unloving, ready to take offense, apt to bear malice, or quick to anger. Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it. Pray for a short memory as to all unkindnesses. I bless God that I know a man who finds it easy to forgive and to forget all offenses against himself. He takes no credit for so doing, for no one ever offends him in a way which is worth remembering. That man has been reminded again and again of the misbehavior of unreasonable and unkind men, but he has honestly said, “I had quite forgotten it.” He does not claim this forgetfulness as a virtue, for as a matter of fact his memory has become weak in that direction and he has no desire to strengthen it. He has never tried to recollect unkindnesses and now, by long disuse, his memory happily fails him upon such matters! That man has often enjoyed exquisite pleasure in doing good to those who have injured him—and he can truly say that, at this moment, he bears no ill-will to any soul upon this earth.

He does not think this to be any singular attainment, for his belief is that every follower of Jesus should be of the same mind. Do you not think the same? I am sure I do. I heard this man once say of another, “He spoke against me that which was false, but if he had known more about me, he might have said something far worse and have been nearer the truth. Perhaps my false accuser believed what he said and thought he was doing a right thing in protesting against what he thought was my fault. At any rate, no one can harm my character, unless I do so myself.” It is a wise thing to profit by every accusation, whether true or false, by trying to be better!

Let us so live as to be able to say, “I am as much at peace with all men as a new-born child.” Thus shall we wear the mark of the Spirit of God. In a word, my Brothers and Sisters—“Even us Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew 18.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 202, 203. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1693 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

÷Col 3.15

THAT HORRIBLE EAST WIND!  
NO. 1693

**DELIVERED AT THE THURSDAY EVENING LECTURE, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are also called in one body; and be you thankful.”***Col 3:15***.**

I do not know how it is, but during the last two or three days I have been called to sympathize with an amount of sorrow such as I have seldom met with before in so short a space of time. One messenger of misery has followed on the heels of another, each one with heavy tidings. Nor is that all, for I have also been perplexed with a large amount of sinning, quarrelling and fault-finding. People are murmuring, grumbling, fretting and fighting on all sides. This has tried me so much that I feel little fitted to act as comforter, for I need comfort, myself. I have endeavored to cheer others till I have drunk of their cup of sorrow and put my own mouth out of taste—I have tried to make peace for others till I am half afraid of losing my own—I have answered the people’s grumblings till I am tempted to have a growl or two on my own account.

Perhaps I may relieve my own mind by the sermon which I hope to deliver. I said to one whom I greatly esteem, “I do not know how it is, but everybody seems out of sorts with everybody else just now.” His wise answer was, “THE WIND IS IN THE EAST.” This fact accounts for a great deal, for—

*“When the wind is in the east,  
‘Tis neither good for man nor beast.”*  
This is that ill wind which seems to blow no man any good. Some humanities feel the east wind terribly—it sets their teeth on edge and they feel that they must bite the first person they meet. I am glad to find some sort of excuse for my fellow Christians and, if I can find it nowhere but in the east wind, I will make the best I can of it. But I earnestly hope that the wind may soon blow from another quarter and not come from the east, again, till we have had a little respite and laid in a new stock of patience. If a cutting wind causes despondency, vexation, discontent and bad temper—may soft gales visit us frequently and bring us healing in their wings! As fair weather will not last forever, it will be well to prepare ourselves to breast the blast. It will never do for us to have a religion which can be killed by the wind—we must be made of better stuff than that! Yet this wind is blamed and I wish, therefore, that it would take itself off. If I could find a snug corner where the cruel east wind was never felt, I would feel inclined to promote an emigration movement for certain persons whom I will not mention! As for myself, I am afraid that it would not suit me to be altogether screened from the wind, for trials are necessary to one who is called to this ministry. Troubles and east winds will come to the servants of God and they are sent to do us good, for perhaps, if we could get our backs against a protecting wall and sit forever in the sunshine, with no east wind to interfere with us, we would go to sleep, or waking, we might come to love this world so well as to be loath to leave it!  
It would be a horrible thing for any one of us if the south wind should softly breathe upon our cheeks and whisper gently in our ears of longcontinued joy to be found on earth—for then we would be tempted to sit down and say, “Soul, take your ease. You have, at last, found a place free from the trials of time. Therefore eat, drink and be merry, and let the future world care for itself.” When I turn over in my mind the events of the last few days I do not suppose that there is more discord or discontent in the world just now than at any other time, but it happens that a number of black lines have all found their center in me and my thoughts have had to travel out in all those directions—all which is trying enough, but all the more so when the wind is in the east.  
It is a coincidence, but the same has happened before. I have had to unravel many tangled skeins in my time out of love to others. I did not get the threads into a ravel, but people are very fond of bringing me their snarls to disentangle and, when I have a hope of succeeding, I try my best. Gladly would I be a peacemaker, but it is much easier to make a snarl than to put it straight, again—especially in the east wind. I have tried to set things right and, meanwhile, I have asked myself, “Is there not a remedy for these mischiefs?” I feel assured there is such a remedy. Family discomfort, husbands and wives that cannot agree, domestic difficulties, brothers and sisters that fall out, Church troubles, members that are not treated kindly by others, (not generally the kindest sort of people, themselves, I notice), difficulties in business, difficulties in preaching—the world teems with these things!  
When the wind is in the east, we meet with many people who cannot earn enough wages, others who do not believe they were ever treated well since they were born. There are others, again, who are highly deserving people, but have never yet been appreciated as they should be. And these all come out in crowds when the wind is in the east. Good men become rabid for something new, find fault with old friends, invite debate and quarrel about nothing—and this happens most often when the wind is in the east. When this kind of spirit gets among Christian people, it is very sad. But surely there must be a remedy for it! Many nostrums are proposed, many quacks are ready to prescribe this and that form of remedy for troubles and discords, but the results of the east wind are not to be removed in that way—a higher power is needed.  
I have heard of pills for the earthquake and medicine for the comet— but I have no such patent medicine for the east wind! All I have to tell you is borrowed from an old Book in which the wisest prescriptions are to be found—prescriptions so excellent that if they were followed, the inhabitant would no more say, “I am sick.” This windy night I shall take you to the great Physician of souls, Jehovah-Rophi—The Lord Who Heals Us—who is able to cure all our diseases and to give permanent relief from all evil so that our spirits shall be at rest. I believe that we have a prescription in this verse, which, if it is well attended to, will deliver you out of all troubles, make you sing all your lives long, help you to travel from earth to Heaven and be, all the while, as happy as the birds in the air! Here it is—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are also called in one body; and be you thankful.” If we dissect our text, we shall find, in it, four pieces of advice.  
I. First, POSSESS THE PEACE OF GOD—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” It cannot rule in your hearts if you have never felt its power! Therefore, make certain that you are truly reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Many persons have peace, but, alas, it is false peace. They have the peace of a soft, gentle, timorous, time-serving character—a mean sort of peace, which, if it hurts no one else, often ruins its possessor. Some have the peace of ignorance, the peace of stupidity, the peace of utter indifference—false peace. These are the followers of those false prophets who cried, “peace, peace,” where there was no peace. Woe to the man whose peace of mind is like the deadly smoothness of the current just as it nears the waterfall!  
Many are at ease in a condition which might make a wise man’s hair turn gray in a night. They were never emptied from vessel to vessel and, therefore, they are settled upon their lees—but they shall be poured out to their utter confusion. They think right well of themselves, but already the axe of judgment is lifted against them. The peace that we need to possess is the peace of God, which means, I think, first, peace with God. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to feel that the great cause of quarrel between our fallen spirit and the great Spirit is taken away—that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—that sin, the great divider, has been cast into the depths of the sea and that there is established between us and God, a happy fellowship!  
I hope many of you are, at this hour, enjoying such peace. If you have it, rejoice in it! If you, then, are at peace with God, do not perpetually act as if that peace were questionable and doubtful. Do not sigh and cry as if the matter trembled in the balance. If we believe in Jesus Christ, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Oh, the joy of knowing that, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” and that, therefore, they can never return from so immense a distance—yes, never return at all, for the Lord Jesus Christ has cast them into the depths of the sea—and if they are searched for, they shall not be found! Yes, they shall not be, says the Lord! Blessed is that man who has peace with God through the atoning blood!  
Growing out of this there comes, next, a peace with God with regard to all His Providences which can only come through a complete and entire submission to the Divine will, for some there are who are not at peace with God, even about a certain Providence that afflicted them years ago. They remain quarrelling with God about the decease of a beloved wife, or child, or mother—they cannot forgive God for having taken a flower out of His own garden. If they were wise, they would not thus rebel, but find in their loving Savior a recompense for all their losses. Was not that fine of Andromache, when she remembered that she had lost all her relatives except her husband, and, gazing on him with delight, said—  
*“While my Hector still survives, I see  
My father, mother, brethren, all in thee!”*  
Cannot a Believer say the same of the Lord Jesus? Far be it from us to raise a question about what the Providence of God has already done! It must be right! The point is to keep on submitting to that Providence in what is now transpiring. If, for the present, the will of the Lord should send me poverty, obscurity, pain, weariness, reproach, I must be at peace with God about it all.  
If the Lord says to me, “Go across the sea and leave all your friends,” I must not delay. If He says, “Preach unwelcome Truths of God which will make you enemies,” I must not hesitate. If He says, “Stay in the house with rheumatism,” I must not come out of doors. If the Lord says, “Lie on your back and cough,” it is not for me to quarrel with Him and say it ought not to be so. If He denies us that which we think would make us not only more happy, but more useful, it is of no use for us to kick against the pricks. The Divine appointment will certainly be fulfilled and the misery to us will be in struggling against the yoke, in endeavoring to have it otherwise than Divine love and infinite wisdom have determined it should be!  
If you cannot change your place, change your mind till your mind shall take to your place and you shall love it! Why, there have been men so helped of God to conquer self that they have hugged their crosses! I think it is Rutherford who somewhere says that he was half afraid lest he should begin to love his cross better than Christ. That is a fear which will seldom need to cross our minds, but, oh, we ought to be perfectly satisfied, perfectly content with that which pleases God! “If this is the Lord’s will, it is my will”—such a saying comes from a happy heart! But if God has one will and we have another, it is clear that the peace of God does not yet rule our hearts. Though forgiven and though the grand cause of quarrel is gone, yet we are raising minor points of difference and these instill strife. It is like a great lawsuit that has been decided on all the grand features of the case and yet, here is the plaintiff picking little points, raising little questions and getting up fresh litigation! The point with us is to say, “It is all given up. Whatever You will, Lord, I will; or at least I wish to will. I ask for Grace that I may will it because You will it.”  
This voluntary submission to our Father’s appointment is the peace of God. This peace of God is, also, peace such as God commends—such as God approves. That, you know, is first, perfect peace with Himself and then with all men—certainly with His people, but also with all mankind. “If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.” Take heed that you do not offend! And if you are offended by others, do not offend in return, but accept the offense in patience—forgive it and forget it. Forbear, and when you have done so, forbear! And when you have done so again, forbear! And when you have forborne seven times, still forbear! I will not repeat the advice 70 times seven, though if I did, I should not go beyond the measure of forbearance and of forgiveness which the Lord Jesus would have us display. Be so at peace with God that you feel perfectly at peace with your fellow men.  
Whenever I have suffered a grievous wrong, it has been a satisfaction to me to feel that, if my Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for my offenses and my wrongs, I can look at His Atonement as an atonement for the wrong done to me as well as to God, for He satisfied all parties in that quarrel. Gladly do I say, “Surely, this poor soul may well be forgiven by me, for You have died as the sinners’ Substitute.” In comparison with my own offenses against God, I may well look upon this man’s offense as less than nothing! What if men should do the worst they can do to us? What is it? What if they slay us? It is but a small loss to a Christian to die! Therefore let us harbor no malice, but feel, “No, we have entered into the truce of God and we are the friends of every man that breathes.” For my own part, I have a crusade against the devil and all evil, but the truce of God is upon me with regard to all my fellow men and, from now on, that peace which was proclaimed at Bethlehem by the angels shall stand for me— “Peace on earth: good will toward men.” This is a sweet part of the peace of God! Cultivate it carefully.  
But this peace is called the peace of God because it is peace which God works in the soul. I think I hear you exclaim, “To have such a peace as that—a perfect consciousness of full forgiveness, complete acquiescence in the will of God, perfect forgiveness towards all mankind and an intense desire to live in perfect peace with all, both saints and sinners—how can I get such a peace within me?” Ah, indeed, how can you? It is impossible to unrenewed human nature! Man, by nature, is worse than any wild beast, for he is a menagerie. There is lion in him and there is serpent in him. There is tiger in him and there is wolf in him. There is dog in him and there is devil in him. He is half beast and half devil through the Fall. I do not caricature him—his body allies him to the beast and sin makes him a child of Satan!  
Mr. Whitefield used to describe fallen nature and he was pretty near the mark. “How shall this wild beast be taught to love? Shall the lion eat straw like an ox? It never will till it leaves off being a lion. It cannot do so—it has not fit teeth for eating straw, nor a fit stomach for digesting grass. It cannot live on straw, like an ox, till God changes it and gives it an ox-like nature.” So it is with us—we need a new nature before we can possess this peace with God. But how is that to be done? Shall the Ethiopian change his skin? No. He cannot do that. And if he could, it would not equal the miracle which we require. Our default is not skin deep, only, it is much more than that. Changing skins is difficult, but changing hearts is impossible except to God. Shall the leopard get rid of his spots? Well, that is difficult, but still, the task of taking spots out of leopards would be small compared with the miracle of taking evil out of the very core of our wild beast- like heart and putting into it the peace of God that makes us love. Only God can do it!  
God’s own mighty Spirit must put forth that same energy with which He will raise the dead out of their graves at the Resurrection—for nothing short of creation and Resurrection power is able to transmute this beastly, devilish heart of ours into a heart in which the peace of God shall reign supreme! Well is it called the peace of God! My dear Hearer, do you know this peace? If so, you will understand that because of its excellence, it is called the peace of God. It is a Hebraism, for among the Hebrews they called certain mountains that were higher than others the hills of God— and certain gigantic trees, such as the cedars of Lebanon, were the trees of God that were full of sap. So the peace that is greater than every other peace is called the peace of God—it means the holiest, deepest peace. It is “perfect peace”—peace that nothing disturbs. It is a deep peace—“the peace of God, which passes all understanding”—solemn peace at which you almost stand in awe! It is a hush within the soul in which there is heard nothing of discord or of fear, but a stillness reigns like that which was maintained in the Holy of Holies, within the veil, where seraphim were silent above the Mercy Seat.  
“The peace of God” signifies the peace that never ends, everlasting peace—the peace that will live with us throughout the whole of our mortal sojourn till we come into the land of the immortal!—  
*“There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble roll  
Across my peaceful breast.”*  
“The peace of God.” Oh, I have known it! You, too, my Brothers and Sisters, must have known it when the Lord, Himself, has dwelt within your hearts and kept all adversaries far away. You have then known days of Heaven upon the earth. It has left nothing to wish for except the perpetuation of itself, for you have been satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord—filled with all the fullness of God, anchored fast, settled, grounded, established!—  
*“My heart is resting,  
O my God!  
I will give thanks and sing.  
My heart is at the secret source  
Of every precious thing.”*  
That is the peace of God! Win it, dear Friends, and wear it! By God’s good Spirit enter into this serene haven. Rest in the Lord and be happy in Him, for He is our peace! When the Lord and Giver of peace once comes to tarry in your heart, let Him rest there and charge all about you, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that they stir not up nor awake your Love until He pleases.  
II. But now let us consider the second piece of advice that grows out of the text. If you possess this peace of God, let it occupy the throne—LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS. In order to there being any peace in the heart, or anywhere else, there must be a ruler. Those people who are for putting down all kings and principalities and powers may bid farewell to peace. Anybody who is inclined to anarchy should read Carlyle’s, “French Revolution,” with care and ask himself whether the worst king is not, after all, a great deal better than the despotism of the mob— the carnival of misrule wherein every man does that which is right in his own eyes—all eyes love darkness rather than light.  
Let loose the reins of government, let everybody be equal to everybody else—and a little bigger than everybody else as well—and you will soon see what confusion ensues! See how it is in a house! I hear that there was great deliberation over those census papers, in many families, to know who was the head of the household. But I am quite clear that it was not a happy household where that question took long to answer, for the husband is the head of the wife and where he is not so, everything is out of order—monstrous and outrageous. Where the head is not the head, the hand is not the hand, the eye is not the eye, the heart is not the heart— and nothing is itself at all! All is what it should not be and all is misery. You must have a governing faculty somewhere and, within your own soul, if nothing governs, I tell you boldly, the devil governs! That man who does not control himself is controlled by the devil, for he must have a master somewhere.  
We cannot

ave two masters, but it is quite as certain that we must have one! One power or another will master you. Shall it be your Creator, or His enemy? Your Savior, or your destroyer? It is a blessed gift of Grace if a man is enabled by the Holy Spirit to say—“The peace of God shall rule in my heart.” Paul advised this—“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” If it is in your hearts at all, it must rule, for it has power to put down all rebellion. You know, when we have a government and a magistracy with power at their back, if a riot arises, we appeal to the lawful power to come and protect us and put down the uproar. So in our hearts, if we have a master principle and that master principle is the peace of God, we may, with confidence, pray, “O Lord, put down this riot. I am tossed to and fro in my heart about my circumstances. I do not like them and I quarrel with You about them. Come, peace of God! Come and put down my murmuring! Come and calm my wicked, discontented spirit.” Or do I feel some discord in my spirit towards one whom I ought to love? I must cry, “Come, peace of God. Come, and arrest this bad temper of mine! Handcuff it. Take it off to prison. Give it hard labor and short commons! Bring it down till it is no longer able to rebel as it does. Come, peace of God, and help me in the struggles of my daily life, that I may not break out into anger, wrath, malice and all uncharitableness. Come, peace of God, put forth Your mighty power over my soul.” This is the great remedy for the discord within and the discords without—the grand cure for all distempers of the east wind and all besides. Yield yourself to the control of the blessed peace of God, for I find that the Greek word has that force—“Let the peace of God umpire in your hearts.”  
You know the umpire in the Greek games decided how the runners should run; how the wrestlers should wrestle and he ruled a contest to be, or not to be, according to the law of the festival. He said, perhaps, that such-and-such a blow in the fight was a foul blow, and if he said so, there was no questioning him—it was decided. He stood at the finish line when the runners came in and he declared a certain swift-footed racer to be the winner. No man ever questioned the dictate of the umpire! His voice ended all debate. He was the man who decided in the games and whose verdict was never to be disputed.  
Now, the peace of God is to do the same in our hearts. We ought to be resolved to judge all things by the peace of God. “What ought I to do in this case? Must I humble myself? I do not like it, but how ought I to act? Shall I yield?” Pride says, “Never! No, no! Play the man. Never give in!” But what does the peace of God say? It says, “Yield. Submit.” Christ says, “I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other, also. And if any man will sue you at the Law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak, also.” Christ decides that it will be good to be a sufferer rather than to take revenge. We ought to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts so as to let it decide our course and lead us to do that which is consistent with our own peace with God.  
I do not know how you find it, but I know that I cannot afford to be angry. It takes so much that is valuable out of me. I am sure it does. It does a man, physically, an immense mischief. To some men it is a dangerous thing to get excited, it even endangers their lives. But, spiritually, I believe that to get into a state of enmity towards anybody is one of the most grievous diseases which can befall a Christian! In such a case you cannot pray as you did. You cannot read some passages of Scripture as you did. You cannot look the Well-Beloved in the face, and say, “I am acting in a way that pleases You.” It is, therefore, a very serious thing for a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to break his own peace—serious to himself as well as to those that are round about him.  
I pray you, therefore, dear Friends, let the peace of God decide for you in all trials of temper, enduring of wrongs and questions which lead to debate and separation. Set Peace in the chariot and let it hold the reins, for anger will, like Phaeton of old, set the world on fire. Oh, Peace of God, rule me! Pray God that the power of this peace may be constantly upon you. If you lose your peace with God, you lose your power to judge under difficulties. You lose your power of self-control under provocations. You lose the best sovereign that ever held a scepter! I believe that if a man is walking with God in the Light of God and enjoying full fellowship with Heaven, he may go down into any meeting, however turbulent—into any society, however discordant the elements may be—and yet he will be wise to answer, wise to be silent, wise to do, or wise not to do—for the peace of God will keep him calm and quiet.  
Once let the mind be thoroughly disturbed and unhinged before the Lord—and you are weak as any other man and you will say that which you will have to unsay—and you will do that which you would wish to wipe out with your tears! When rest of soul is gone, hard things are spoken and hard things are done which would not consort with communion with the tender Lord. Let the peace of God always rule, or otherwise you will not always be safe. Especially let the peace of God rule your affections! Be satisfied that you love God and that your heart cleaves to God and does not follow after any other. Be at peace with God as to your heart and, when that is so, and the affections are dominated by conscious love to God, it is then that you fight the battles of life with comfort to yourself and with honor to the name of Him to whom you belong.  
III. Very briefly, I want, in the third place, to say, STRENGTHEN YOURSELF, dear Friends, BY GOD’S SPIRIT, WITH ARGUMENTS, in order that you may let the peace of God rule in your hearts and may be kept from any breach of that heavenly peace. Remember, you can only be happy in heart and healthy in spirit as long as you keep the peace of God. You are sure to become wretched and unhappy—you are sure to stumble, here and there, into faults—if that peace of God is gone. As you would be in the best possible condition for walking with God in joy while here, below, look to your peace. This is no mean argument—try to feel the force of it.  
And, next, only thus can the Church of God prosper. I am grieved when I receive members from other Churches who come because they say that they are weary of the incessant bickering and jealousies which have disturbed their rest. I am sure that there can be no blessing where there is no peace. A house divided against itself cannot stand. A Church disputing is a Church committing suicide! Many and many a Church has come to its death by bleeding inwardly through strife—otherwise it might have defied the whole world and Hell itself! It is generally the little Churches that squabble most—if they cannot excel in anything else, they certainly claim the first rank in quarrelling. A few Christian people get together to serve God and the devil comes in, at once, and sets them by the ears—they are good men and true—but Satan bewitches them so that they dispute about nothing at all.  
Whenever I have to settle a dispute, I always like to have some big, bad thing in it. This I can point out and we soon agree to set the matter right. When I cannot, with a microscopes on my eyes, find out what it is all about, I find that Brothers and Sisters are hardest to be reconciled. It is easier to shoot an owl than a gnat! Little differences rankle like tiny thorns and you cannot get them out of the flesh. Oh, that the Spirit of God would come upon the Churches and turn them into masses of fire! Then they would not fall to pieces through intestine strife! When souls are being won; when the Gospel is being enjoyed; when Christ is being glorified; when the Church is marching on, conquering and to conquer through the Divine power that is in her, then is there peace within her borders and her citizens are filled with the finest of the wheat! But once let the life of God run low and let the Spirit of God depart, then peace departs, too. Oh, may God save this Church and save all the Churches from missing this blessed peace! Let the peace of God rule in your heart, dear Brother, dear Sister, for the Church’s sake.  
Remember, next, that God cannot be glorified unless there is the peace of God in our hearts. My dear Friend, if you are always troubled and fretting and anxious, I do not see how you can glorify God to any large extent. Seek more faith, more trust, more confidence, more calm of mind and you will personally glorify God. I am sure a Christian man who always finds fault with everybody is of little service to the cause and kingdom of our Lord. He who, wherever he goes, acts like a carrion crow that soars aloft with no other design than finding out where a carcass may be, that he may light upon it—he, I say, is not a man after God’s own heart—and neither will he advance the Lord’s work among men! When you love your fellow Christians so that their faults are covered by your charity and you rather admire their excellences than publish their infirmities, then it is that God is glorified by you! A happy, peaceful people of whom men can say, “See how these Christians love one another”—these shine as lights in the world and the darkness feels their power!  
The passage from which our text is taken offers us other reasons. It says this—“To which you are also called.” You were called to the peace of God. My dear Brother, if you are not a peaceful man, you have not inherited your true calling. When the Lord called you out from the world, He called you to be a peacemaker. He called you on purpose, that the Spirit of peace might be shed abroad in your heart and that afterwards you might carry that peace with you into your own family and among all your neighbors and spread it everywhere. The Lord Jesus never called a man to be a maker of strife! If a Christian woman, as she calls herself, goes from house to house with tittle-tattle, she was not called by God to do so—of that I am certain!  
A man goes into his pulpit and preaches a personal sermon on purpose to empty out his own spleen—God did not call him to that, for God loves not firebrands! The man may have been sent as a messenger from other regions, but certainly not as an ambassador from Heaven, when he preaches gall and wormwood. Some seem, wherever they go, to make mischief as speedily as possible—their mission is contention, whereunto they certainly were not called of God! You who are the true heirs of Heaven are called to peace—seek peace and pursue it. Wherever you go, labor earnestly to make peace. If you see two boys fighting, make them stop. If you see two girls in a bad temper, try to make them happy with one another. If you see two people disagree in business, do not back one of them up, and cry, “Go to the law with him,” but plead for peace and mutual concession. “Blessed are the peacemakers.”  
Whatever you may be in a household, whether father or child, husband or wife, master or servant, son-in-law or mother-in-law, let your soul be seasoned and savored with that blessed word, “Peace.” There is always a war party in England—I fear the Jingo is no foreigner, but the genuine offspring of the British bulldog! An unconverted British is all for blood, fire and glory—and as the unconverted are the majority among us—we remain a fighting nation. Fighting—how we delight in it! Down with the Afghans, down with the Zulus! The Boers? Destroy them! We cannot get our fill of glory and honor unless we get knee deep in blood! The policy of peace is voted dishonorable and so we go from land to land till there is hardly a nation which has not been stained with blood by British hands. How fiercely these English talk—but it is not Christian talk! May the Lord teach us the language of peace.  
Be you at peace, “whereunto also you were called.” And then, notice next, “Called in one body.” There must, therefore, be peace among Christians because we are called in one body to peace. What would you think of my hand, if it should say, “I will have no peace with the eye. That prying eye looked sharply at me the other day and spied out a spot. I will put it out”? We shall not enjoy much prosperity if the members of the body thus disagree. Suppose my foot should say, “I am not going to carry that heavy body about. See what I have to suffer through it at times.” Suppose my knee should say, “I will not have it. I have been tortured quite enough with rheumatism—I will no longer carry that heavy fabric.” What will become of me if the members of my body thus fall to quarrelling? And what is to become of the Glory of Christ if His members live in contention? What is the Head to do if the members who make up His one mystical body have nothing to do but to be striving, one against the other? Oh, no! If you have any differences, end them tonight, I pray you, if you can, even though the east wind is so piercing! If you have unwittingly done anything that grieves others, try to remedy it. Or if others have grieved you, end the matter by sweet and swift forgiveness. Let it be all ended with the east wind! We are called in one body, therefore let us dwell in hearty peace and may God the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of peace, bring us into the peace of God and keep us there, for thereunto we are called in one body.  
IV. The last point upon which I shall speak is this—to keep yourselves right, OCCUPY YOUR MINDS HEALTHILY. “How?” you ask. The text says, “Be you thankful.” That is the way to keep up our peace with God! “Be thankful.” Do not complain, but bless His name for everything! Do not quarrel with Him, but be thankful. Say, “Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” That is the way to be at peace with Him—to be thankful at all times. Bless God for your mercies and for your miseries! Bless Him for your gains and for your losses! Bless Him for your enjoyments and pleasures, and also for your aches and pains! Bless Him for every hard thing that comes from Him, for there is as much love in the hard as in the soft—God is as kind when He uses the rod as when He gives a kiss. “Be you thankful!” Bless Him from morning to night and all through the night watches. What a mercy to be out of the hospital! What a mercy to have the use of one’s limbs and reasoning powers! What a mercy to be out of prison! What a mercy to be out of Hell! “He has not dealt with us after our sins.” Be thankful! Last Sunday morning, when I read this chapter in the great congregation, I tried to ring it out as loudly as ever I could, and I would like to ring it out as with a whole peal of bells now. Set them all ringing a marriagepeal, if you like— “Be you thankful! Be you thankful! Be you thankful!” Up, you murmuring! Up, you discontented! “Be you thankful.” Rouse yourselves, you sullen ones! You that think you have a heavier load to carry than is fair and say, like Cain, “My burden is greater than I can bear”—“Be you thankful!” All of you, young and old, “Be you thankful.” That is the way to keep up your pence with God and your peace with your fellow men! Well, but it does not mean only, “Be thankful to God,” but be you thankful to your fellow men.  
Too many receive all kinds of Christian kindness as a matter of course. They look upon the spontaneous kindness of their Brethren as a sort of right. Now, that the poor should be helped by Christian generosity is certainly according to Scripture—but this is an obligation not of debt but of Grace. Whatever is done in almsgiving and charity should be gratefully and heartily received. It is an unholy spirit which scarcely has the courtesy to say, “thank you.” Towards one another we ought to have a thankful spirit. How thankful the child ought to be to his mother and his father! What a happy home we should have if children recognized the deep debt of obligation that is really due to those who have nursed them and cared for them so long! How obliged, I think, the husband ought to be to his wife for all her tender kindnesses—those hundred unseen ministries of love! How grateful, I think, the wife should be to her husband, for all his labors and anxieties! She receives a thousand things from him which make life comfortable. If we live in mutual gratitude, feeling that we are, each one of us, indebted to all others, how merrily will the household wheels go round and what families of love we shall all gather around us! I, of all the people in the world, am most in debt to everybody—and I feel it deeply and truly. There is hardly a person that I look upon from this pulpit but I owe something to his or her Christian love. Everybody has been kind to me and I am not unmindful of it. When I have lain upon my bed, sick and ill, I have marveled at the kindness of you all! I wonder why you treat me so lovingly! In all holy work, whether it is the College or Orphanage, you have been my ready helpers and you still are. I cannot help saying, “God bless you.”  
Surely the wind is changing a point or two—we shall find it blowing from another quarter when we leave this Tabernacle! I feel intense gratitude in my soul towards the dear Brothers who surround me and the Sisters that work with me for Christ. You have often made me happy and cheered my spirit by the kind and generous way in which you have worked with me for the Lord, bearing with all my infirmities. And I believe that it is because I feel thankful that I feel peaceful and so remain the center of your unity. I am not inclined to quarrel with anybody—I would sooner run a mile than I would fight for half a minute! There is nobody in the world that I would like to contend with—my heart is full of good wishes to all men! It has been a sort of rule with me to measure a man before I fight him—if he is bigger than I am, I know he will beat me, so I decline battle! And if he is smaller and I can easily beat him, it would be cruel and cowardly to do so.  
Nobody in the world is worth contending against as to our temporal interests. Even the necessary law is troublesome and vexatious. Be you thankful, then, and if, with thankfulness to God and thankfulness to those around you, you can fill up the day, oh, how happy will the days be! In the family and in the business, God will be glorified, the Church will be sweetened and welded together—we shall see better times and shall no longer grumble at the east wind! May God bless you!

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÷Col 3.16

CHRIST’S INDWELLING WORD  
NO. 2679

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 17, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 10, 1881.

**“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with  
grace in your hearts to the Lord.”***Col 3:16***.**

THAT is a very beautiful name for Holy Scripture. I hardly remember to have met with it anywhere else—“Let the word of Christ dwell in you.” Remember, dear Friends, that Christ Himself is the Word of God, and also remember that the Scriptures are the word of the Word. They are “the word of Christ.” I think that they will be all the sweeter to you if you realize that they speak to you of Christ, that He is the sum and substance of them, that they direct you to Christ, in fact, as John says of His Gospel, that they were “written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name.”

Remember, also, that the Scriptures do, in effect, come to us from Christ. Every promise of this blessed Book is a promise of Christ, “for all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” They all come to us through Christ, God speaks them to us through Him as the Mediator. Indeed, we may regard the whole of the Sacred Scriptures, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, as being “the word of Christ.”

The text tells us, first, how to treat the Scriptures. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” And, secondly, it tells us how to profit by them. “In all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

I. First, then, we are told here HOW TO TREAT THE SCRIPTURES— “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”  
In order that it may dwell in you, it must first enter into you. It is implied, in our text, that the Apostle says, “Let the word of Christ enter into you.” Then you must read it, or hear it, for, unless you do, you will not know what there is in it. Yet there must be something more than the mere hearing or reading of it, for some hear the Truth of God with one ear, but let it go away out of the other ear. And others are great readers, yet they seem to read only what is on the surface. The letter passes under their eyes, but the deep spiritual meaning never enters into their heart. If you read a portion of Scripture every day, I commend you for doing so. If you make a practice of reading right through the Bible in a stated period, I commend you still more. Some I know read the Bible through every year, in due course. This is well, but all this may be done and yet “the word of Christ” may never have entered into the reader!  
You know how children sometimes learn their lessons. I am afraid that, at a great many schools, there is no true instruction—the scholars have simply to repeat their lessons without ever getting at the sense and meaning of them. And, a week or two after, they have forgotten all that they were supposed to have learned! Do not let it be so with our knowledge of Scripture—let us not merely know it so as to be able to turn to its different chapters, or to be familiar with certain passages in it, or even to repeat all its words. This is but to let “the word of Christ” pass by your door, or look in at your window! Paul says, “Let it dwell in you.”  
So I say again that in order that it may dwell in you, it must first enter into you. You must really know the spiritual meaning of it. You must believe it, live upon it, drink it in—you must let it soak into your innermost being as the dew saturated the fleece of Gideon. It is not enough to have a Bible on the shelf—it is infinitely better to have its Truths stored up within your soul. It is a good thing to carry your Testament in your pocket—it is far better to carry its message in your heart. But mind that you let it get right into you!  
How differently some people read the Bible from the way in which they read any other book! I have seen a young woman sitting down, on board a steamboat, completely absorbed in a very suspicious looking book. I have passed behind her and passed before her, but she has not taken the slightest notice of me. Presently, I saw a tear brushed away from her eye—I knew that she was not reading the Bible—and it was my firm conviction that she was reading a novel. I have often noticed how such people let the novels get right into them, trash as they generally are—but when the most of people read the Bible, they appear to be anxious to get the unpleasant task finished and put away! In some cases they seem to think that they have performed a very proper action, but they have not been in the least affected by it, moved by it, stirred by it. Yet, if there is any book that can thrill the soul, it is the Bible! If we read it aright, we shall, as it were, lay our fingers among its wondrous harp strings and bring out from them matchless music such as no other instrument in the world could ever produce! There is no book so fitted or so suited to us as the Bible is. There is no book that knows us so well. There is no book that is so much at home with us. There is no book that has so much power over us if we will but give ourselves up to it! Yet, often, we only let it look in at our window, or knock at our door, instead of inviting it to enter our very heart and soul—and therefore we miss its power.  
Then, when it once gets into you, let it remain there. A person could not be said to dwell in a house even though he should enter into the most private part of it, if he only passed through it and went away. A man who dwells in a house abides, resides, remains, continues there. Oh, to have “the word of Christ” always dwelling inside of us—in the memory, never forgotten! In the heart, always loved! In the understanding, really grasped with all the powers and passions of the mind fully submitted to its control! I love those dear Christian people who do not need to refer to the printed page when you speak to them about the things of God, for they have the Truth in their hearts. They have a springing well within their souls at all times and they have only to hear a Scriptural theme started and, at once, they begin to speak of the things which they have looked upon and their hands have handled of the Word of Life, because it dwells in them.  
What is the good of merely external religion? I heard of some people who met together to pray about a certain matter, but they could not pray because the Bishop had not sent the form of prayer which they were to use on that occasion. I think that if they were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they might have managed to speak to God without the necessity of having a written or printed form to guide them. Yet there are many who fancy they cannot offer a proper prayer unless they have it in a book. And they cannot talk about the things of God, or they can say but very little about them because they have not “the word of Christ” dwelling within them. O dear Friends, let it be always in you, from morning to night, abiding as a constant visitor within your spirit—no, not merely as a visitor, let it dwell with you—  
*“No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home.”*  
Further, “let the word of Christ dwell in you” so as to occupy your whole being. If it dwells within you, let it take such entire possession of your being that it shall fill you. To push the truth of Christ up into a corner of your nature—to fill the major part of your being with other knowledge and other thought—is a poor way to treat “the word of Christ.” It deserves the fullest attention of the best faculties that any man possesses. The Truth of God revealed by the Holy Spirit is so sublime that its poetry outsoars the eagle wings even of a Milton. It is a deep so profound that the plumb line of Sir Isaac Newton could never find the bottom of it. The greatest minds have been delighted to yield their highest faculties to its wondrous Truths. Dear young Friends, you who have only lately put on Christ, I beseech you not to let other books stand on the front shelf and the Bible lie behind. Do not, for the most part, read those other books and only read small portions of Scripture now and then—let it always have the chief place. The most excellent of all sciences is the science of Christ Crucified and the Bible is the textbook for all who would learn it! If other forms of knowledge are useful, they are like the planets—but the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is as the sun. Let this always be the center of your system of knowledge and let all the rest that you know move in subordination and subjection to that first and best form of knowledge.  
If I may know myself, and know my Savior—if I may know my sin and the Atonement by which it is put away—if I may know my way through this life and my way into the eternal life above, I will be content if I know but little else. Gladly would I intermeddle with all knowledge and, though “much study is a weariness of the flesh,” yet would I find a pleasure in such weariness if I only knew even as much as Solomon knew. But it would be vanity of vanities, and altogether vanity, if you and I were as wise as Solomon, and yet did not know the Truth of God. Therefore, “let the word of Christ dwell in you” so as to occupy the whole of your being! Let it be the resident, the occupant, the master and ruler of your entire nature!  
Once more. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you.” That is, let it be your most familiar friend. We know the people who live in our home, but we do not really know other people. When someone asked Mr. Whitefield, “What do you think of Mr. So-and-So’s character?” He answered, “I cannot say, for I never lived with him.” Ah, that is the true test! It is living with people that lets you know what they are. In like manner, if you will live with “the word of Christ,” especially if you will let it dwell in you and abide with you as a constant friend, you will get to know it better, and the better you know it, the more you will love it. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, if you meet with a man who finds fault with the Bible, you may be certain that he never read it. If he would but read it in the right spirit, he would be of another opinion. And if you find a professing Christian indifferent to his Bible, you may be sure that the very dust upon its cover will rise up in judgment against him! The Bible reader is always the Bible lover, and the Bible searcher is the man who searches it more and more. Various pursuits have a measure of fascination about them, but the study of God’s Word is fascinating to the highest degree. Jerome said, when he was pondering a certain text, “I adore the Infinity of Holy Scripture.” I have often felt that I could say the same. The Bible is a book that has no bounds to it. Its thoughts are not as men’s thoughts, a multitude of which may go to make up half an ounce! Any one of the thoughts of God can outweigh all the thoughts of men. This Book is not a book of pence, or a book of silver, or even a book of gold, but a book whose every leaf is of untold value! He shall be enriched, indeed, who lets “the word of Christ” richly dwell in him.  
My dear Friends, I should like you to so read the Bible that everybody in the Bible should seem to be a friend of yours. I should like you to feel as if you had talked with Abraham and conversed with David. I can truly say that there is hardly anybody in the world that I know so well as I know David. In making The Treasury of David, I have labored, year after year, in that rich field of Inspiration, the Book of Psalms, till I assure you that David and I are quite familiar friends. And I think I know more about him than about any man I ever saw in my life. I seem to know the ins and outs of his constitution and experience, his grievous faults and the graces of his spirit. I want you to be on just such intimate terms with somebody or other in the Bible—John, if you like, or Mary. Sit at Jesus’ feet with her. Or Martha—it will not hurt you to make the acquaintance of Martha and do a great deal of serving, though I do not want you to get cumbered with it. But do find your choicest friends in the Scripture. Take the whole company of Bible saints home to your heart, let them live inside your soul. Let old Noah come in with his ark, if he likes, and let Daniel come in with his lions’ den, if he pleases—and all the rest of the godly men and women of the olden time—take them all into your very nature and be on familiar terms with them! But, most of all, be specially intimate with Him of whom they all speak, namely, Jesus Christ your blessed Lord and Master!  
As for the doctrines revealed in the Bible, you should have them at your fingertips. The great Truths of the Word of God should be as familiar to you as a scholar makes his much-loved classics to be, or as the mathematician makes his plus and minus, his a and his x, familiar to him from hour to hour. So should you prize “the word of Christ.” “Let it dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”  
II. But now, secondly, I am to tell you How TO PROFIT BY THE WORD OF CHRIST, if we once get it to dwell in us.  
First, seek to profit by it yourself. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Let it make you wise. The man who studies his Bible well, will become a wise man. If God the Holy Spirit teaches him, I believe that he will become a wise man even in something more than a spiritual sense. Every Scot child used to be taught the Book of Proverbs—it was one of the class books of Scot schools—and I have heard it said that this particular form of instruction has largely helped to make our Scot friends so sharp. And I should not wonder if that is the case. They certainly are as wise a race of people as we are likely to meet with. I wish our Irish friends would also study the Book of Proverbs. If it would make them as cool as it has made our Scot friends, it might improve them without taking away any of their natural humor and warmth of heart. I wish that English people, also,

would read more of the Bible. I can truly say that when I have met with men in whom “the word of Christ” has dwelt richly, I have often found them very shrewd even about common-place things.  
I remember a man, in a certain workshop, making a great many very rude remarks and, at last, he was silenced by one of the workmen who said to him, “I think, Sir, you are referred to in the 20th Chapter of Proverbs.” He did not explain his meaning, but the man who was thus addressed went home and when he looked up the chapter, he found these words in the third verse, “Every fool will be meddling.” It was an admirable rebuke for him and all the better because he had an hour or two before he knew exactly what it was. And when he reached his home and was at leisure to think, he could look up the passage and see how appropriate it was to his case. If you will take the Word of God for your guide, even in domestic and business matters, you will often manifest a shrewdness which, perhaps, may not be natural to you, but which will come to you through “the word of Christ” dwelling in you richly in all wisdom. That, however, is only a small part of the profit which it will bring to you.  
Do you want wisdom with which to master yourself? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Do you need something to cheer a naturally sinking spirit? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Do you wish for that which will calm an angry mind, a temper all too apt to be suddenly excited? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Are you in a calling where you are sorely tempted and do you long to know how to be kept from falling into sin? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Is your position a very difficult one? Are you scarcely able to balance the claims of different relationships? “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Are you expecting to have a time of intense strain and trial such as you have never experienced before? Prepare yourself for it by letting “the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” It shall give you all manner of wisdom by which you shall be able to baffle even the subtlety of the old serpent himself! We used to have in many of our churches a number of solid, substantial men—“men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”—and an equal proportion of deeplytaught, godly matrons, true mothers in Israel. Well, those stalwart Christians were brought up on such spiritual meat as I have been commending to you. They were diligent students of the Word of God and if we are to have a succession of such men and women, they can only be qualified by going to the University of Scripture and taking their degree by permitting “the word of Christ” to dwell in them richly!  
The next way of using “the word of Christ” to profit is to seek to profit others by it. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” We are to know the Truth of God so as to be able to teach and admonish one another.  
First, we are to seek the profit of our fellows by teaching one another. No one man can ever teach such a vast congregation as I have, so as to give the separate instruction that is needed by each one. This work must be done by the members of the Church themselves. “The word of Christ” must dwell in you and then you must become a Mutual Instruction Society. Every Christian should exercise the office of the pastorate according to his ability and his opportunity. In such a Church as this, every one of the members must look well not only to his own spiritual affairs, but also to the well-being of others. What sweet and gracious instructions the older ones among you can give if you tell your experience! It is very interesting to any of us to hear it, but how helpful it is to the beginners in the Divine life!  
And if, in addition to relating your experience, you talk of the Scriptures that have been opened up to you—the promises that have been fulfilled to you—the passages in the Bible that have been applied to your heart by the Holy Spirit who Inspired them—you will greatly instruct your fellow Christians. A dear Brother in the Lord said to me, the other day, “I do not often meet, now, with those people who talk about the things of God to one another. Even when I meet with Christians, their conversation is generally concerning a meeting or a Conference that is going to be held, or something that is to be done—we do not seem to talk much about Jesus Christ, Himself, and about experimental Truth, and about the sorrows and the joys of God’s people.” I wish we did talk more of such things. It is well to be busy for the Lord, but it is still better to be in communion with Him. You who are deeply taught in the Scriptures should try to teach others for their profit.  
One way of teaching one another is mentioned in the text—“in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” A learned divine, a little while ago, discovered that no hymn ought to be sung unless it was distinctly directed and addressed to God and was intended to be full of praise throughout. Well, we do have some remarkably wise men nowadays—at least, in their own estimation—but it appears that the Apostle Paul thought that “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” were to be used for instruction and admonition as well as for the praises of God! And, to my mind, there is no teaching that is likely to be more useful than that which is accompanied by the right kind of singing! When I am preaching, I often find a verse of a hymn the very best thing I can quote—and I have not the shadow of a doubt that, frequently, a verse of sacred poetry has struck a man who has been altogether missed by the rest of the sermon. Think how compactly the Truth of God can be taught by means of “Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” and how likely it is to be remembered when the very measure and rhyme and rhythm help the memory to treasure up the message! I shall never forgot what repentance is while I can say— *“Repentance is to leave  
The sins I loved before,  
And show that I in earnest grieve  
By doing so no more.”*  
It is well to have the Truth of God put into the form of a verse that the memory may be able to lay hold of it, and to retain it. Do try, dear Friends, to get so full of “the word of Christ” in all forms of it, that you may run with it. You know, it cannot come out of you if it is not first in you. If you do not get “the word of Christ” into you, you will not be instructive in your general conversation.  
In addition to instruction, there is to be admonition. That is a very difficult thing to administer wisely. I have known a Brother try to admonish another and I have felt that he would have done better if he had left the task alone, for he has only caused irritation and resentment. There is a gracious way of admonishing which cannot be too frequently practiced. When I first began to preach, I am afraid that I used to say a great many strange things—which, of course, I do not do now—but having, on a certain occasion, said something rather striking and, perhaps, not quite wise, there was an excellent Christian man who wanted to set me right. He did not come and thrust himself upon me in a very solemn manner and provoke me to scoff at him and his reproof. Neither did he say anything so as to irritate me, but, finding my Bible lying about, he stuck a pin into it at the words, “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” When I was at home, I looked at that pin, and I looked at that text, and I said to myself, “Whose house was I in last?” When I remembered, I said, “That is the man who stuck that pin in there, depend upon it.” I never felt vexed with him! On the contrary, I was very grateful and I always loved and admired him. And I thought, “Now, if he had spoken to me about what I had said, it is possible that he might have stuck the pin into me where I should not have liked it—but as he only stuck it into my Bible, it did not irritate me.” You see, also, that I gratefully remember the rebuke even to this day.  
Sometimes the best way to give an admonition will be by singing a Psalm or a hymn. The clerks in the old Meeting Houses, when they used to be allowed to choose the hymns, often took away much of the evil effect of an erroneous sermon by their wise selection of the closing verses. Now and then, if you are discreet, you can quote an appropriate verse— as people say, “accidentally on purpose”—and you can bring in a portion of a Psalm that shall exactly say for you what you might have said in a blundering way! And the dear Brother who has done wrong will accept the rebuke without being enraged by it. When you attempt to snuff the candle, do not put it out by your clumsiness, but take the golden snuffers—in the form of a verse of a Psalm, or a hymn, or a spiritual song— and even while you sing it, you will be administering the admonition and the instruction which it is your duty to give.  
I wish to put this matter so that it shall be remembered by you, and I want especially to press it home upon you, dear Friends, members of this Church of more than 5,000 souls. What can we do unless you all look after one another? And how shall we ever get on unless, in addition to preaching, there shall be continual mutual instruction going on, wise and joyful and cheerful—and accepted in a kind, loving and generous spirit? God fill you with “the word of Christ,” that you may thus teach and admonish one another!  
But, lastly, “the word of Christ,” when it dwells in us, is to profit us in our relation to God Himself, for, after all, the main objective of our singing—the principal purpose of our teaching and admonishing—must be the glory of God! “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Oh, may “the word of Christ dwell in us” so richly that you shall bless God from morning to night! May you so overflow with holy thought and sacred knowledge that your whole being shall be a hymn of praise to the Most High and your entire existence shall be a glorious hallelujah! I do not think that we, any of us, sufficiently value the Divine ordinance of praise. Neither do I think that we ever shall, till “the word of Christ” has taken full possession of our souls.  
You have been upstairs to pray, you say, and you have got no comfort from the exercise. Let me suggest that the next time you go upstairs, you sing a Psalm. “Oh, I have been up and down,” says one, “trying to awaken myself into earnestness of supplication.” May I also propose to you that you do not try that method again for a while, but begin to praise God. How many times a day do you praise Him? I think you do get alone to pray and you would be ashamed if you did not, once, twice, or three or even more times in the day—but how often do you praise God? Now, you know that you will not pray in Heaven—there it will be all praise. Then do not neglect that necessary part of your education which is to “begin the music here.” Start at once praising the Lord! Many of our doubts and fears would fly away if we praised God more. And many of our trials and troubles would altogether vanish if we began to sing of our mercies. Oftentimes, depression of spirit that will not yield to a whole night of wrestling, would yield to ten minutes of thanksgiving before God! Praying is the stalk of the wheat, but praise is the very ear of it. Praying is the leaf of the rose, but praise is the rose itself, redolent with the richest perfume.  
Praise God, then, “in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” and if you say you do not know how to do it, then “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” It is a praise-begetting thing! Out of every Book of Scripture will stream praises unto Jehovah. Out of every promise will spring a sonnet. Out of every Divine Truth enjoyed and lived upon will rise a spiritual song. The whole Revelation of God is the condensed essence of praise—you have only to give it a fitting opportunity, by setting it simmering on the fire of a graceful heart—and you shall find a sweet cloud of holy incense rising from it, acceptable to the Most High. Therefore, Beloved, be much with your Bibles and let your Bibles be much with you— for your own profit, for the profit of others and for the glory of God! So be it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Col 3:1-17***.**

Verse 1 *.*If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Your Lord and Master has gone up to Heaven. You profess that He represents you and that you have gone up there in Him and with Him. Then do not seek the things that are down here below, the things of earth—but live where your life has gone. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also. “Seek those things which are above.”

2, 3 *.*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead. You profess to be dead to the world. Is that profession false? You have observed that Scriptural ordinance in which you profess to be buried with Christ—was that observance only an empty form? If there was any truth in your profession, “You are dead”—

3 *.*And your life is laid with Christ in God. You have a new life now—it is up yonder, “where Christ sits at the right hand of God.” Do you not feel drawings upward? Are there no longings after the high and heavenly estate where Jesus is? Come, Beloved, let your soul break loose for a while and, like a lark, having found its liberty ascends with joyous wing, singing as it rises till it is out of mortal sight, so let it be with you!

4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory. You are hidden now, your life is veiled in Him, but, at His Second Coming He shall shine forth in all His Glory and “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Beloved, seek no greatness here! Ask not for any exaltation of yourself among the sons of men, but wait for your true manifestation with Christ in Glory!

5 *.*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Kill all these evil things! Do not let them live in you for a single moment. The command applies not only to the grosser actions which are summed up under the head of fornication and uncleanness, but to all that leads to those foul sins. Not only to the fire, but also to the sparks, such as “inordinate affection,” a sort of softness which is seen in some persons, men and women, too, and which often leads to something far worse—and “evil concupiscence,” the first desires towards that which is unchaste. God give us Divine Grace to kill these loathsome things at once, for if thoughts of evil are indulged, they soon become acts of evil, and then who knows how far we may go in the way of unholiness?

Sin, if allowed to grow in the heart, will soon take gigantic strides and come out in the life. Depend upon it, whenever a professing Christian goes into overt sin of the kind mentioned here, he does not do it all of a sudden. The evil has long been festering and fomenting within his heart, or it would not have manifested itself thus. Oh, if he had only watched and destroyed the thief before he broke into the house, what a mercy it would have been! You notice that covetousness is put down with the most filthy sins and it is described as idolatry. The desire to possess the goods that belong to others—the lust to get gain at any price—this is idolatry.

6, 7. For which things’ sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience: in which you also walked some time, when you lived in them. This was true of the Colossians and it was true of almost all those to whom Paul wrote, for these gross evils were scarcely regarded as sins in his time, so polluted had the nations become. I hope that in the case of many now living, they have been preserved by Christian training from having walked even for a time in such sins.

8 *.*But now you also put off all these. Put them all off, like old clothes that are never to be worn again. “Put off all these”—  
8. Anger. It is hard work for some to pull that garment off, for it fits them so tightly. This burning coat of wrath will not readily come off, but the Apostle’s command is, “Put it off! Put it off!” It does not become a Christian to be an angry man.  
8. Wrath, malice. Christ will not live in a heart that harbors malice.  
8. Blasphemy. Thank God that if we ever wore that robe, we pulled it off long ago.  
8. Filthy communication out of your mouth. All talking that is of a dubious character must go. Anything which savors of corruption and defilement must be put away from every Christian.  
9. Lie not one to another. In Paul’s day, lying was thought to be a virtue unless the liar happened to be exposed. In that case it was considered wrong. But to lie through thick and thin, and to lie so dexterously as to deceive, was looked upon by an Oriental as an accomplishment of which he might be proud. So the Apostle might well write, “Lie not one to another”—  
9, 10. Seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him. There is nothing false or untrue in God. God is true and in Him is no falsehood at all. And if you and I have really been renewed, as we profess to have been, we shall hate the very semblance of a lie and our word will be as good as our bond.  
11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Whenever you hear certain very wise Brothers and Sisters say, “Suchand-such a promise in the Bible is for Israel, not for the Gentiles,” do not be misled in the least by their assertion! Just quote this text to them— “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” These distinctions all vanish when once we come to Christ! We are one in Him and every promise to Believers is good to all who are in Christ Jesus, for “Christ is all, and in all.”  
12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, hearts of mercies, kindness. Be ready to feel for others. Be very considerate of their needs. Look at others as if they were your kith and kin. If you and they are in Christ, they are indeed your kin, so put on kinned-ness, or, “kindness”—  
12. Humbleness of mind. Do not try to be a big man. He who thinks himself big has not yet learned the true spirit of Christianity. Especially towards those who are sorrowful and sad, be pitiful, be kind, be humble.  
12*.*Meekness. If others try to provoke you, do not be provoked by them, but be gentle and meek.  
*12.*Long-suffering. Continue to put up with others, remembering the Lord’s long-suffering with you.  
13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. Hear this, Beloved, I pray you! Especially those of you who have hot tempers and have fallen out with one another. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Remember how much Christ has forgiven you and show a forbearing and forgiving spirit to others.  
14. And above all these things put on charity. Or, rather, “love”—  
14. Which is the bond of perfectness. The perfect bond, the belt that goes round and keeps every other garment of virtue in its place.  
15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body. Do not fall out with one another. You are called to peace, for you are called in one body. Does one hand in the body fight with the other hand? Does the foot contend with the eye? Of course not, for they are in one body. So are you in one body with all your fellow Christians, therefore lay aside all strife. I deeply deplore when I see Christians—and especially eminent Christians—contending with one another about minor matters of small account. Surely, almost anything ought to be borne before there should be public strife among members of the one body! God grant that such a state of things may speedily come to an end wherever it has existed! We have enough to do to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” without contending for our own dignity or honor.  
15. And be you thankful. That is a nice little text, “Be you thankful.” When you are grumbling at your plain food, put this as a sandwich between your bread and butter, “Be you thankful.” When you are complaining of the East wind, just try if you cannot spell this little sentence, “Be you thankful.” When you are murmuring about those sharp pains and that long sickness, this is the kind of tune for the little bird to whistle at your window, “Be you thankful.” We have all much for which we ought to be thankful, however sad we may think our lot to be. Look on the bright side, rejoice in God! “Be you thankful.”  
16, 17. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. Do not draw any line of demarcation, and say, “So far is secular and so far is religious.” Let your whole life be religious— and if there is anything proposed to you in which you cannot glorify God—do not touch it! “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” If any of you go to the theater, can you go there in the name of the Lord Jesus? Why, you would not dare to cross the threshold with such blasphemy in your soul! And when you go to any place of doubtful amusement, can you go there giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ? Can you thank the Lord that you are permitted to go and pray for Divine blessing when you go and when you leave? A lady once said to a Christian minister, “The pleasures of going to the play are very great. There is the pleasure of thinking of it beforehand, the enjoyment of it at the time, and then the pleasure of thinking of it afterwards.” “Yes, Madam,” said the good man, “and there is one other pleasure which you seem to have forgotten—that is the pleasure of thinking of it on your dying bed. I would like you to remember that.”  
Let me read this verse again. “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” If you cannot do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, do not do it at all if you are a Christian! And even if you are not a Christian, you will be accountable to God, by-and-by, for all that you do.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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÷Col 3.17

METHOD AND MUSIC, OR THE ART OF HOLY AND HAPPY LIVING.

NO. 913

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 30TH, 1870,  
***BY C. H. SPURGEON,***AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” —* **[Col 3:17](tw://bible.*?id=51.3.17|_AUTODETECT_|)***.*

**IT is always an advantage to have the laws of a kingdom as concise as possible. No one will ever be able to tell how much of litigation and consequent calamity has been caused in this country by the confused condition of our laws. When Napoleon issued his celebrated “Code Napoleon,” which is an admirable summary of French law, he conferred upon the empire one of the greatest boons, and proved himself a wise ruler. We want law to be put into such a form that it can be understood, and that its application to divers cases can be discovered at once. In the great moral government of God we have no room to complain in this matter; the precepts of holiness are few and comprehensive. First of all, the whole of morality was summed up in ten commands, and written upon two tables, then, as if this were not concise enough, we have the whole law summarised in two commands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself;” and even this is brought into shorter compass still, for that one word “love” is the essence of all divine law. We, as Christians, find in the text an instance of the terseness, brevity, and clearness of divine precepts. We have here a law applicable to every believer — to every action, word, and thought, in every place, under all circumstances; and yet this comprehensive command is expressed in very few words. It is a great advantage to the mechanic to be able to carry with him in a small compass his square or rule, by which he can adjust his materials, discover his errors, design correctly, and estimate his work when finished. Without such a rule, he would be quite at a loss; with it he is ready for work. We have before us a compendious rule of life, a standard of morals, a guide to holiness, which we may carry in our memories without the slightest difficulty; and which, if we have but the will to use it, will be found never to fail us on any occasion. As the mariner’s compass or the pole-star to the mariner, so may the text be to us. Here is an infallible directory as to the way of holiness; a judge whose decisions in the matter of righteousness and truth none need distrust. Read the text over, and then I shall ask you to observe the points in it. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Observe, first, holy walking described; in the second part of the verse note holy music prescribed; and to enforce the whole text bear with me patiently till we close with the third head, which will be holy motive inscribed — inscribed, I trust, upon all our hearts.**

I. HOLY WALKING DESCRIBED. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all

**in the name of the Lord Jesus.”**

**This rule is not applicable to every person here present; it can only be practiced by the regenerate. You must be in Christ before you can do anything in Christ’s name. Until your nature is renewed, until you have submitted yourselves unto the righteousness of Christ, until Christ is formed in you the hope of glory, you are not capable of walking after this high and hallowed fashion. “Ye must be born again.” The precept demanding your immediate attention is not the precept of this text but another; the words of Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, are for you, “Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;” or this, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” You must begin at the beginning. It will but mislead you if I exhort you to walk as believers before you have received the inner life. The root must be changed before the fruit can be bettered. You need a radical change, my unconverted hearer, and you must have it or perish everlastingly. Do not imagine that any imitation of Christian manners will save you: do not conceive that hanging upon your lifeless branches the semblance of fruits will transform you into a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Oh! no, the sap within you must be changed, the life of God must be infused into your soul, you must be made one with Christ, or you cannot serve him. This precept, belongs, therefore, to none of you who have not believed in Christ Jesus, but it belongs to all of you, without exception, who are named by the name of Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity; to all of you who have submitted yourselves to his government, and are trusting in him for salvation. You will listen, I trust, and give earnest heed to this message from your Beloved.**

**What then meaneth this, that we are to do everything both in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus? Answer: there are six points in which this precept requires reverent care. First, do all through the office and name of Christ as Mediator. You as a Christian are bound to offer daily praise; you should often lift up your heart in grateful songs and psalms to God, but see to it that you do all this work of praise in the name of the Lord Jesus. No praise of yours can be sweet with God except it be presented through your great High Priest. Bring therefore your gift of thankfulness to this altar which sanctifieth the giver and the gift, and ever bless God through Jesus Christ. You are also to abound in prayer; it is your vital breath. You cannot flourish as a Christian unless you constantly draw near to God in supplication, but your supplications must always be presented through the name of Jesus Christ. His name gives prevalence to prayer; it is not so much your earnestness or sincerity, as his precious blood, that, speaks in the ears of God and intercedes for you. Pray ever then with your eye upon the finished propitiation and the living Intercessor; ever plead the merit of Immanuel, and heaven’s gate shall open to you. In addition to your prayers and praises, you are bound to serve him according to the abilities entrusted to you in teaching the ignorant the way of salvation, in bringing in the unconverted, and in edifying the saints; but remember that your service to God in these respects can only be acceptable as you present it through the name of Jesus Christ. The hand of the Crucified One must offer for you the sweet cane which you have bought with money, and the fat of all your sacrifices. If you could give to God all the wealth that you possess, all the time of your mortal existence, all the talents with which you have been endowed, if you could do this henceforth without a failure, yet if you did not present the offering through Jesus Christ it would be as though you had done nothing; your burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings would have no acceptance with Jehovah, for your sinful nature pollutes them all. How necessary it is then that we should often pause in our holy work, and say, “I am doing this for God, but am I presenting it in the appointed way? If I see aught of merit in what I am doing I am acting contrary to the gospel rule, and I shall be rejected. I must bring all my work to the High Priest of my profession and offer it through him.”**

*Th’ iniquity of all our holy things  
Is cleansed by his blood, which covers all,  
And adds a rich perfume divinely sweet,  
Winning acceptance at the throne of God  
For broken prayers, and faulty songs, and e’en For service marr’d with sad infirmities.*

**Take heed, dear hearer, that thou see the blood sprinkled on thy service for God. Almost all things under the law were sanctified by blood, but all things under the gospel, without exception, must be thus made sweet to God. The atoning sacrifice, the prevalent intercession of the one appointed Mediator, Christ Jesus, must be constantly before our minds in all that we attempt to do for our Lord God. Let us never forget this lest we fail utterly.**

**A second meaning of this precept is, “Do all under the authority of the Lord Jesus as your King.” Say of such-and-such a doubtful or evil action, “This I cannot do; I could not feel that I was authorised to do it by any precept or example of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This I cannot do, for I should be stepping aside from the allegiance which I owe to him; therefore this I will not do, be the consequences what they may of loss or of suffering. I am not authorised by Christ to follow this course, neither will I, come fair, come foul.” On the other hand, when the act is allowed in Scripture, and only forbidden by the traditions of men, you may safely say, “This I feel that I may do. I see my Master has laid down no restriction, therefore I will submit to no human tradition or regulation. The commands which will — worship would inflict upon me I cast to the wind, for superfluities of pretended holiness are but superfluities of naughtiness.” When positive duty is concerned, your language will be, “This action I find that I must do, for I see an express command for it; therefore it shall be done; be it difficult, it shall be achieved; be it impossible, I will wait on him who enableth faith to remove mountains.” O that every Christian were altogether and evermore obedient to heavenly rule. As the planet revolves undeviatingly in its orbit, because with the law imposed upon it there has come forth a constraining and impelling force, so may we also pursue our course of duty, because we have not only heard the divine precept, but feel the sacred energy of the Holy Spirit leading us in the prescribed path. Brethren, how safe we feel, and bow happy in our consciences, if we are certain that we have the authority of the Great King for all our actions! The business of a Christian upon earth is not an independent one; he is not acting on his own account, but he is a steward for Christ. What if I compare him to a commission agent who is sent abroad by his firm with full powers from his employer to transact business for the house which he represents? He is not to trade for himself, but he agrees to do all in the name of the firm which commissions him. He receives his instructions, and all he has to do is to carry them out, his whole time and talent being by express agreement at the absolute disposal of his employers. Now, if this man shall lend himself to an opposition firm, or trade on his own account, he is not true to his engagements, and he has to bear the responsibility of his acts; but so long as lie acts for his firm, and does his best, his course is an easy and safe one. If be follows the instructions of his principals he is eased of all responsibility. Should his trade be profitable or otherwise, he need not be vexed with anxieties, provided he has diligently followed the commands received from home. His acts are authorised from headquarters, and they are, therefore, safe for him; he falls back on his principals who gave him the commands, and in whose name he acted. Now if we serve ourselves or the world, we must take the consequences of our unfaithfulness, but if we honestly serve the Lord all is clear. When a Christian can say concerning any course of conduct, “I am bidden to do this by Christ Jesus my Lord, I can find chapter and verse to authorise my acts;” when he can feel that he is working for Christ, and not for himself, with a single eye to the glory of God, and not with sinister aims and selfish motives, then he treads as on a rock, and defies the censures of his enemies. Let us, then, take good heed to our Lord’s words, and walk carefully in his commands, for then his authority protects us, and every tongue that rises against us in judgment we shall condemn.**

**This rule of acting under the authority of Christ is applicable in an emphatic sense to those who are called to special service in the kingdom of Christ. Every man is called to do all the good he can, but some men are set apart to labor in peculiar departments of Christian work, and these should be doubly careful to do all in their Master’s name. If a man were sinking through the rotten ice, any one of us would be authorised to do all we could to save him, but the iceman, who is appointed on purpose that he may save life, has a peculiar authority for anything that he takes upon himself to do in the way of rescuing the drowning, for he has the name of the Royal Humane Society at his back. If a ship were stranded and breaking up, and the crew were ready to perish, we are all of us authorised to do all we can to save the shipwrecked, but the men who belongs to the lifeboat’s appointed crew have a right to come to the fore and take the oars and put out to sea. They are authorised to lead the way in daring and danger. So, my brethren, those of you who have felt the divine call within you, the sacred impulse which compels you to devote yourself to the salvation of your fellow men, you may do it boldly and without apology. Your authority is from Christ, for the Holy Spirit has set you apart for the work. Let no man hinder or dispirit you. Press forward to the front rank in self-denying labor. Call it not impertinence, O ye carping critics, it is but holy courage which brings earliest hearts to the fore. Push to the very front, ye men of God, filled with daring and self-sacrifice, for if others should impute your zeal to evil motives, the Lord who reads the heart understands you, and having given you a commission he will not fail to vindicate his faithful servants.**

**A third sense of the text is important. We should do all under the sanction of the Lord Jesus as our exemplar. It is an admirable course for us all to pursue, if when we find ourselves in circumstances of perplexity we ask ourselves the question, “What would Jesus Christ have done if he were in my circumstances?” The answer to that question is the solution of your difficulty. Whatever he would have done it will be safe enough for you to do. It is certain that he would not have been unbelieving; equally certain that he would not have done a wrong thing to deliver himself; we are also sure that he would not have been impatient, rebellious, or despairing, nor would he have grown wrathful or morose. Well then, I know what I must not be, it may be possible to learn my positive as well as my negative behavior from the same guide. I shall be able to discover by turning over the pages of the evangelists some portion of the Savior’s life very like my own; what he was in that situation I must ask grace that I may be, and I shall certainly be led in the path of wisdom. The royal rule for a Christian is not what is fashionable, for we are not to be conformed to this world; not what is gainful, for the pursuit of gain would lead us to run greedily in the way of Balaam for reward; not that which is generally prescribed in society, for full often the prescriptions of society are antagonistic to the teachings of Christ; not even the conduct of professors, for too many even among them walk as Paul tells us even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ. Alas! my brethren, the current holiness of the church falls far below the scriptural standard; neither are the common rules of action among professors such as we could safely follow. A safe example is to be found nowhere but in the life of Jesus Christ himself; even the holiest of men are only to be followed so far as they follow Christ, but no further. My brethren, how calm will your hearts be, how serenely will you face your afflictions if you can feel, “I have done nothing but what my Master did before me; I have sought to tread in the footprints of his pilgrimage!” Why, you must be safe, you must be accepted if you do as Jesus did; for never can Christ’s example lead a simple soul astray.**

*‘Tis always safe for souls to follow on  
Where Christ their holy Shepherd leads the way.*

**Furthermore, as we are to do all through the office of Christ as Mediator, within the authority of Christ as King, under the sanction of Christ as Exemplar, so we should do everything to the glory of the Lord Jesus as our Lord and God. When the Spanish mariners were traversing the seas upon voyages of discovery, they never touched upon new land, whether an insignificant island or a part of the main continent, without at once setting up the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella, and taking possession of the soil in the name of their Catholic Majesties of Spain. Wherever the Christian goes, his first thought should be to take possession of all hearts in the name of the Lord Jesus, consecrating all opportunities and influences to the Redeemer’s service. Such common things as eating and drinking become by the giving of devout thanks consecrated to Christ’s name. There is no action which is lawful, however common-place it maybe but may be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If the intense desire of our spirit shall be that we may glorify God as long as we are in this body, we shall find ways and means of accomplishing our object, and the Holy Spirit will help our infirmities. My dear brethren, our soul’s desires should be always true to Christ, most chastely faithful so as not to tolerate any carnal motive or self-seeking. How easily do we give place to self-glorification! How almost insensibly do we expect to receive honor of men! It is very hard to keep ourselves clear of self-seeking under some form or other, for even self-denial may be used with an object which is the reverse of self-denial. The old philosopher seeing a fop in fine apparel, pointed at him, and said, “that’s pride,” but he was equally right when seeing certain Spartans who affected to dress meanly, he said, “and that’s pride.” Pride often stands in the doorway, but it can as readily hide in the corner. There is a pride of self-sacrifice and a pride of apparent humility, which is everyway as haughty as vainglory itself. Dear friends, we must live for Christ, cost us what it may of watchfulness; we must not fail here. We dare not live for a party, or a sect, or even altogether for any one church, however dear to us, for Jesus’ sake. We may live for the truth, but only because God is glorified thereby. First and last, midst and everywhere, the constraining thought of Christian life should be “all for Jesus.”**

*All for the Master, all without reserve,  
All to the utmost of our manhood’s might;  
Each pulse, each throb of heart and thrill of nerve, Each hour of busy day and silent night.*

**Beloved, it is delightful to know that Christ is all mine, and I am all Christ’s. It is a holy aspiration to desire to enjoy as much of Christ as our nature can receive, and then to exhibit as much of Christ as grace can enable us to reveal. “Everything for Jesus;” “Christ all and in all Christ,” let these be the mottoes of every believer. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” aiming ever at his glory.**

**The fifth point is, do all in the strength of the Lord Jesus as your helper. With him is the residue of the Spirit; and the Spirit of God is the believer’s power. “Without me ye can do nothing,” saith our Lord, and we know the truth of that saying by unwise attempts which have ended in mournful failures; but let us in future remember this truth practically. Never let us commence a work without seeking strength from on high. We go about Christian service very often as though we felt ourselves quite up to the mark for it; we pray without asking the preparation of the heart from God; we sing — ah! my brethren, how universally is it so-without at all entreating the Holy Spirit to quicken our praises; and I fear some of us must confess sorrowfully that we preach at times as though the preaching were to be our work and not the work of the Holy Ghost through us. Do not you, as bearers, too often listen to the word as if the mere hearing of it would do you good, or as if the speech of such-and-such a man would be certainly blest to you, instead of waiting upon God beforehand that your going up to the assembly might be profitable to your souls? Do all in the Master’s strength, and how differently everything will be done! Acknowledge all the time you are at your work that your strength comes from the Lord alone. Never let the thought cross your mind that you as an experienced Christian have a fitness for the work peculiarly your own, so that you can dispense with prayers for divine aid, so necessary to the young; never imagine that because through long years you have performed a service with acceptance you can therefore now do it without renewed help. This is the way by which we sink into routine, degenerate into religious automata, and become like formalists and hypocrites. This is the way in which the power of God and the vitality of godliness are rendered so rare in the churches. If we do not feel conscious day by day of abiding weakness and consequent need of fresh strength from the Most High, we shall soon cease to be full of grace. Write this upon the tablets of your heart, “All my fresh springs are in thee,” and from this day forward in word and deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; deriving all your spiritual energy from him.**

**Sixthly, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, for he should be the element in which we live. It is said of the modern Greeks that whatever may be their faults mentally, they are faultless physically, for you never saw a Greek peasant in an ungraceful attitude, however much he might be off his guard and unconscious of your gaze. Gracefulness is a part of the Greek nature. So let the Lord Jesus Christ be so woven and intertwisted into your very self, that you cannot be otherwise than Christlike under any circumstances. Lord, grant us this. It would be a glorious thing to be saturated through and through with the spirit of Christ, so as to live Christ evermore. That eminent ornithologist, M. Audubon, who produced accurate drawings and descriptions of all the birds of the American Continent, made the perfection of that work the one object of his life. In order to achieve this he had to earn his own living by painting portraits, and other labors; he had to traverse frozen seas, forests, canebrakes, jungles, prairies, mountains, swollen rivers, and pestilential bogs. He exposed himself to perils of every sort, and underwent hardships of every kind. Now, whatever Audubon was doing, he was fighting his way towards his one object, the production of his history of American birds. Whether he was painting a lady’s portrait, paddling a canoe, shooting a racoon, or felling a tree, his one drift was his bird-book. He had said to himself, “I mean to carve my name amongst the naturalists as having produced a complete ornithological work for America,” and this resolution ate him up, and subdued his whole life. He accomplished his work because he gave himself wholly to it. This is the way in which the Christian man should make Christ his element. All that he does should be subservient to this one thing, “That I may finish my course with joy, that I may deliver my testimony for Christ, that I may glorify God whether I live or die.” We have thus seen what it is to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; let us stop a moment to remind you that this text administers a severe rebuke to many professed Christians. Too many church-members do nothing in Christ’s name. Since the day when they were baptised into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, they have done nothing else in that name. Ah, hypocrites! ah, hypocrites! God have mercy upon you! Alas, how many others do but very little in Christ’s name! I noted in a letter, by a certain pastor, not I think given to speak severely, this remark — that he did not think in his own church one in three of the members were doing anything for Christ. I could not speak so sorrowfully as that concerning you; but I much fear that a large proportion of the strength of this church is not used for the Lord. I believe that there is more used here than in almost any other church, but still there is a great deal of waste steam, a great deal of buried talent, and thereby Jesus is defrauded. I noticed in an American paper an observation made concerning the Baptist churches of North Carolina. A man acquainted with them said, “There are a hundred thousand members reported in the various associations, there are a hundred thousand baptised persons, and seventy-five thousand of them are only ‘baptised dead heads.’“ It is an American term, but I am afraid we shall have to import it, for it is frightfully true that numbers of professors are just so many “baptised dead heads.” They are of no use; they are not working — they are perhaps grumbling — the only sign of life they have; but they are neither giving of their substance nor laying out any other talents in the cause of Christ. If there be any such present, I pray that this text may be a thorn in your side, and act as a spur to you; and may you henceforth do all that lies in your power in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

**The text also rebukes those Christians who do much in the name of some eminent Christian man. I shall not censure any particular denomination, but if the truth censures them, let them hear it. When George Whitfield refused to form a new sect, and said, “Let my name perish, and let Christ’s name last for ever,” he acted as his Lord would have him. Paul was not crucified for you, neither did Apollos die for you, therefore take none of these names, but let the name of Christ be named among you, and under that name be ye known. Though there is a Lutheran church, it was a good saying of Luther, though couched in rugged words, “I desire above all things that my name should be concealed, and that none be called by the name of Lutheran, but of Christian. What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ’s. I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass, that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms, that any of the sons of God should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatical names; let us be denominated from Christ, from whom alone we have our doctrine.” It shall be well for all churches when they are ruled by the like spirit. Names which indicate their difference of doctrine will probably survive till Christ comes, but the names of men they will do well to discard.**

**Once more, what a rebuke is our text to those professors who dishonor the name under which they profess to live! The Spaniards in America acted so cruelly, and with such a dreadful lust for gold, that when they sent their missionaries to convert the Indians, the Indians wished only to know whether the religion that was taught them was the religion of the Spaniards, for if it was they should like to believe something the very opposite of it; and if there was no heaven but where the Spaniards went, they would sooner go to hell than be with them. Truly some professors’ lives give much the same savor to the Christian religion. Men say, “Are these Christians, these mean, covetous, quarrelsome, domineering, or boastful people? then we will sooner be infidels than Christians.” Out upon you, ye caricatures of godliness. If there be one such here, may his conscience prick him. You have crucified the Lord afresh, and put him to an open shame. How dreadful will be your punishment if you die in your present state! Repent of your sin, and ask of God grace to make your profession sincere; and if you will not do this, at least be honest enough to give up your false profession, for you do but degrade but it and yourself. There is no necessity, surely, to add to your innumerable sins, this sin of hypocrisy. What gain you by it? Nay, sir, if you must serve mammon and the devil, serve them; but why with supererogation of iniquity must you pretend to serve Christ?**

II. We leave this first point, and find in the second part of the text, HOLY

**MUSIC PRESCRIBED. “Giving thanks unto God and the Father by him.”**

**Soldiers march best to battle when the trumpet and drum excite them with enlivening strains; the mariner brightens his toil by a cheery cry at every pull of the rope; and it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as to work, and mingle holy music with holy service. The best music of a Christian consists in thankfulness to God. Thanks should be rendered by the believer with all the acts common to men. Our eating, our drinking, our social meetings, our quiet conversings one with another, in all we should give thanks unto God and the Father. This we should do in the labors peculiar to our vocation. Whatever your trade and calling may be, if you cannot sing aloud, you can sing in your hearts while your hands are busy; you can ring out the praises of God as well to the sound of the hammer on the anvil as to the peal of the organ; your feet at the sewing machine may beat time to a sacred tune; you can as well praise God while you crack your whip as when you sing to a Psalm tune. Why not? If the heart be right you can mount up to the heavens from any place or labor. Whatever your calling may be you shall find some peculiarity in it which shall help you to magnify God, if you will but use a spiritual eye to discover it.**

**We ought especially to praise God in the exercise of our religion. Whenever the assemblies of God’s people meet, there should be much of holy joy. Some people are so afraid of joy, that one might suppose them to labor under the delusion that all who are devout must also be unhappy. If we worshipped Baal, to lance ourselves with knives were most fitting, if we were worshippers of Juggernaut or Kalee, self-inflicted tortures might be acceptable; if we adored the pope, it might be proper for us to wear a hair shirt and practice flagellation; but as we worship the everblessed God, whose delight is to make his creatures happy, holy happiness is a part of worship, and joy in the Lord one of the accepted graces of the Holy Spirit. Brethren, let us be happy when we praise God. I have noticed with pain the way in which people will get rid, if they can, of happy words out of their hymns. The hundredth Psalm for instance, runs thus:**

*“All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Him serve with — “*

**What? Well, they modernise it into***“Him serve with fear.”***But, as I believe, the older form is**

*“Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.”***I wonder some other scribe did not cut out the word “cheerful,” and put in —***“Sing to the Lord with doleful voice.”*

**In this way the Psalm might have been “improved” until there would not have been a grain of worship left in it. I mean to sing it. “Him serve with mirth;” and with a glad and merry heart will I praise my God. If you are his child, rejoice in your Father’s presence; if you are pardoned, rejoice in the mercy that washed away your sins; even if you are tried and troubled, yet rejoice that your afflictions are working together for your good. “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.”**

**The text tells us under what aspect we should regard God when we are thus thanking him, “Giving thanks unto God and the Father,” blessing him that he stands in that relation to us as well as to the Lord Jesus. The belief in the divine fatherhood will surely make the sons of God happy. It is instructive to observe that thanks are directed to be offered especially to the Father; I suppose because we are most apt to forget to praise the Father. We love Jesus Christ for dying for us; we forget not the Holy Spirit because he dwells in us; but the common idea of the Father is dishonoring to him. Is he not regarded as all justice, and seldom as the fountain of love? Now, it is the Father who stands at the back of all in the eternal purpose; it is the Father who gave the Son to die; it is the Father who justifies us through the righteousness of Christ, and adopts us into his family. The Father is equally to be loved and worshipped with the Spirit and the Son, and through Jesus Christ we should come to God, the terrible God as he was to us in our ungodliness, and worship him as the Father now with thankful joy, because of the mercies we have received. The gist of this second precept is that you stir up your hearts, my dear friends, to the cultivation of a cheerful spirit; that you excite that cheerful spirit to the use of thankful words, telling to your friends and neighbors the goodness of God to you; that these words be oftentimes elevated into songs; that these songs should, as on wings of flame, ascend up to where perfect spirits praise God both day and night. O we that love the Savior, do not neglect this, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God.” Glorify him, then. This praise, this cheerful spirit wins on others. They, marking how you give thanks, will be attracted to your Savior and your God, while you will strengthen yourselves also, for “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Despondency and murmuring will hamper you in all your efforts to glorify Christ, but to maintain an inward spring of thanksgiving is one of the best ways to keep yourselves in spiritual health. God help you, then, to carry out both these precepts.**

*Work and praise! Hearts upraise!  
Drink your fill of joy!  
Happy they who all the day  
Spend in Christ’s employ.  
For their song makes them strong,  
Ready for their toil;  
And their mirth, not of earth,  
Sorrow cannot spoil.*

III. A few words upon the third point, namely, HOLY MOTIVE TO BE

**INSCRIBED upon our hearts to secure obedience. These motives are four. A word on each.**

**Beloved in Christ, you have received all you have from God the Father through Christ. That you are not in hell is due to his longsuffering; that you have been spiritually quickened is due to his gracious operation; that you are pardoned is due to his precious blood. Owing all to him, what arises in your mind but gratitude? And what is the dictate of gratitude? Does it not teach you that it is your reasonable service to surrender yourselves to him who bought you at such a price? For, ah, what a return it will be, how poor compared with what he has done for you! If you give your body to be burned for him, yet he deserveth infinitely more than all the sacrifice of the most painful death to recompense his stoop from the highest throne in glory to the cross of the deepest woe. Let your gratitude compel you to do everything for Jesus.**

**Reflect, too, that the Wellbeloved for whom I plead to-day is worthy. “Him hath God the Father exalted.” Do you demur to that exaltation? Do you not rather rejoice in it? Is not that Song most true —**

*“Worthy is he that once was slain,  
The Prince of Peace that groan’d and died;  
Worthy to rise, and live, and reign,  
At his Almighty Father’s side”?*

**Will you deny, then, to Christ that which he is worthy to receive? He deserves the crowns of angels, and the songs of all the perfected; will you not give him the best you have, even your hearts? I appeal to the justice which I trust governs your judgment — should not Jesus Christ be the one object of your life? Further, many of us here present have professed to be his disciples. We remember well the day when we were buried with him in baptism unto death. We voluntarily came forward and we took upon ourselves to be immersed in his name, copying his example and obeying his command. If that act meant anything it meant this, that we professed ourselves to be dead henceforth to the world and risen with Christ. Now, by the profession then made, by the communion then enjoyed, I pray you, my dear brother and sister, whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the Master’s name. Let not this appeal to your honor be forgotten.**

**Lastly, I need not thus plead with some of you, for your hearts are pleading with you. I know you love him whose name is as ointment poured forth; I know how the tendrils of your heart have entwined themselves about his cross. His person fixes all your love; you are only happy when you are walking in communion with him; he is the sun of your soul, without whom you cannot live. Well, then, do what love dictates. Bring forth the alabaster box of ointment, break it, pour the sacred nard upon his head, and if any ask, “Wherefore is this waste?” say that he is worthy of it, and that you love much because you have had much forgiven. This day bring forth the best that is within your store, the spiced wine of your pomegranate, and set it before your Lord, while Jesus sups with you and you with him. Again I say arouse yourselves to live at a more vigorous rate, and let the whole of the force and energy that dwells within you, and all that you can borrow from the seventh heaven, be given up to him who loved you and gave himself for you. May my Master’s blessing be with these words, to all who hear or read them, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.**

**÷Col 3.24**

ALL FOR JESUS!  
NO. 1205

**A SERMON DELIVERED OF LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 29, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You serve the Lord Christ.”***Col 3:24***.**

The Gospel does not merely supply us with directions for holy living but furnishes us with reasons for obedience and tells us where to find the power to obey. Hence in the commencement of this chapter, before the Apostle comes to any practical exhortation, he reminds us of our position and privileges. He bids us remember who and what we are as Believers in Christ, that we may act accordingly. We are risen with Christ and, therefore, our affection should not be set on earthly things. We are dead to the world and, therefore, we must not, cannot live in sin. Christ is our life and, therefore, we must walk after His example.

The Apostle knew right well that the conditions of Believers here below are various and, therefore, he laid down distinct precepts for each position. Some are masters and others servants. Some parents and others children—and in each case the requirements differ. But while he suited the exhortation to each one, he proposed a common motive for all. He reminded all Believers, whether wives or husbands, children or fathers, servants or masters, that there is another and a better life which rewards are worthy of our ambition, which service should engross all our strength. He bade them have respect to that higher life, for they had been representatively lifted up into the highest Heaven in the Person of Jesus Christ and with Him their hearts and desires should always be.

He bade them live the life of Heaven here below and order their footsteps, not in accordance with the fleeting things of time, but the enduring realities of eternity. He knew that in so doing, the inconveniences of the present would be forgotten in the glories of the future—and the trials of today would be more than counterbalanced by the joys of the hereafter. Our authorized translation is in the indicative and states the fact, “You serve the Lord Christ.” Is it the fact with each of you? To how many in this place can it be truly said, “You serve the Lord Christ”? I find it might also, and not incorrectly, be translated in the imperative. “Serve you the Lord Christ.” In this sense it may be directed to those who have no share in it as a statement of fact.

Let us take it in both senses. If we dare to hope that we serve the Lord Christ, let us listen to further exhortation and serve Him better, still. Let us thank God for the measure of service which He has worked in us, and let us earnestly ask Him to work in us still further to will and to do. But if any of you are not yet included in the sacred band who call Jesus, “Master and Lord,” then when you have trusted in His blood, come and yield your whole selves unto Him. If, indeed, you are redeemed from wrath through Him, I charge you to not be disloyal to the obligations under

which you are laid, but from this time forth make it your joy to “serve the Lord Christ.”

To me, my text is one of the most joyful sentences from which I have ever preached. “You serve the Lord Christ.” What an exaltation for a slave of Satan to become a servant of Christ! With what exultation do I hail permission to do anything for my Lord! To be blessed by Him, to be enriched with priceless gifts from His bounteous hand—this is lovingkindness! But to be allowed to render tokens of gratitude in return is sweetest of all! Truly, we may say of this condescension, “Your gentleness has made me great.” By receiving anything from us, the Lord has lifted us as beggars from the dunghill and set us among princes, even the princes of His people! It is a greater honor to serve Christ in the most menial capacity than to occupy the throne of the Caesars!

I speak of honor. I may also dilate upon the happiness of the service of Jesus! It is the purest of pleasures. We long to express our affection for Jesus by acts of zeal. Love pants for expression and is not obedience the tongue of Love? That love is counterfeit which does not declare itself in some practical form or other by deeds of kindness, or gifts, or sacrifices, or patient endurance, or hearty praise. Beloved, let us count it an unrivalled honor and an unsurpassed delight to do anything for Jesus! For this service let us be insatiably ambitious, resolved at all costs to show our loyalty to our Prince.

To serve us He laid aside His glorious array and girt about Him the garments of a servant! For us He took a basin and towel and stooped to wash His disciples’ feet! For us He became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross! Now, therefore, in our turn, by all the shame He bore, by all the labor He endured, by all the agonies He suffered, let us serve Him and Him, alone, forever!

In handling the subject of Christian service, I shall note three things— first, we serve the Lord Christ in the common acts of life. Secondly, we serve Him in what are usually called religious acts. And thirdly, we have learned to serve Him, and, I trust, we may do it more and more, in special acts of direct homage to Himself.

I. First, then, “you serve the Lord Christ,” IN THE COMMON ACTS OF LIFE. The fact that our text was addressed to the lowest rather than to the highest in worldly circumstances is very instructive. Paul has been visiting a family and he has spoken a word to the wife and a word to the husband. He has paid attention to the children and given a warning to the father. He has, also, a message for the master of the house—but he does not address to either master, mistress, or children, that choice saying which he reserves for servants—“You serve the Lord Christ.”

The Greek word, here, translated servants, may be rendered, “slaves,” though its meaning is not confined to slaves, yet it includes them—and there were many such in the Christian Church in Paul’s days—truly converted men and women who were still held in bondage according to the cruel Roman law. The Apostle goes into the kitchen, the cellar, the field, the winepress, the stable and he says to his Brothers and Sisters toiling there—“You serve the Lord Christ.” He whispers in the ear of the aged man who acts as porter at the door, whom he knows to be a devout Believer—and this is the secret which he whispers—“Fear not, Brother, for despite your bonds you serve the Lord Christ.”

In those hard days, when Paul wrote from Rome to Colosse, many a slave crept out from Caesar’s household by stealth to listen to his gracious words. And poor workpeople gathered around him and were converted—and as he felt deep sympathy with them, he did not merely admonish them to be honest, industrious, conscientious and obedient, as many a preacher would have done—but he went further and cheered them in the performance of their duties by assuring them that they served the Lord Jesus, and from Him they would receive a reward! He knew their sorrows and their provocations and, therefore, presented them with a rich consolation and a stimulus.

He exhorted them to act “as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” This he said to servants and to no other class in particular. He did not mean, thereby, that the wife, the husband, the master and the child might not and did not serve Christ, but he would have us infer that of those who did—whose lot was least distinguished—much more should those do whose responsibilities and opportunities are so much greater. If my poor servant should serve Jesus, how much more ought I to do it? If those with the least education and means are bound to serve Him, how much more should those who have 10 talents, lay out all for His Glory?

My Brothers and Sisters, you see that those to whom Paul spoke were not preachers, nor deacons, nor elders of the Church. Neither were they magistrates, or persons of influence—they were simple servants, engaged in domestic duties—but he says of them, “You serve the Lord Christ.” Though what I have to say bears upon all present, I will keep to the line of thought which this fact naturally suggests. Those who are in low estate serve the Lord Christ by a quiet acquiescence in the arrangement of Providence which has placed them where they are. Everyone knows that while the human race exists in its present condition, somebody must serve. It is a paradox, but it is also a truth, that if there were no servants we should practically be all servants.

There are a thousand offices which, if each person were obliged to perform them for himself, would be exceedingly tedious and unpleasant. They are now done for us by persons to whom use renders them not at all irksome. As things are at present constituted, there will be poor and there will be rich, there will be servants and there will be masters. And when a man can say, “I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content, for I bow to the Providence of my heavenly Father,” that man is, in his heart, serving the Lord Christ. To stand where the Lord places us and keep our position cheerfully, has in it the essence of obedience.

We serve the Lord, next, in service, or in any other form of life, if we exercise the Graces of the Holy Spirit in the discharge of our calling. The servant who is in all things trustworthy and neither wastes his employer’s time nor goods—the servant who does not watch his master’s steps so as to loiter when he is out of sight, but conscientiously renders a fair day’s

work for his wage, treating his master as he would wish to be treated if their positions were exchanged—such an one, exhibiting truthfulness, gentleness, sobriety, honesty and industry, serves the Lord Christ as much in his labor as if he were an Evangelist or an Apostle!

He does not preach vocally, but his life is a powerful sermon. He is a standing evidence of the power of religion, an argument which logic cannot overthrow, nor the most cunning sophistry confute. Holy living preaches where the minister cannot enter—it preaches from the nursery to a worldly mother, from the shop to a graceless tradesman—from the workroom to a godless employer. Where the preachers’ words are denied a hearing, your lives will, nevertheless, win attention. At the first the Gospel was very much spread in the noble families at Rome by means of their slaves. They noticed how different they were from other slaves and as they observed their conduct, they inquired what this new religion was which so much improved them.

Christians were Christians then! They made their Lord their first and last object. They surrendered their whole lives to His service and hence they were a power in all places. The poorest and meanest did not think themselves exempt from the sacred duty of spreading the faith! None, indeed, asked for a discharge in this war. Domestic servants became missionaries to the families in which they resided and acted as Apostles in houses where the Apostles could not enter! We serve Christ in such a position by displaying the joy of the Lord in our service. I lay great stress upon this point. Many a soul has been converted to our Lord Jesus by noticing the cheerfulness of poor Christians.

If a heathen master had a Christian slave, he noticed how contentedly he accepted his hard toil and hard fare. He saw his countenance beaming with delight and he even heard him sing for joy! He would naturally want to know the reason for that cheerfulness. Servants had a sorry lot with Roman masters and mistresses. I have seen some of the mere dog holes in which the slave who kept the door found sleeping quarters in the city of Pompeii—yet from such wretched abodes would rise the voice of Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs—and the children would wish to hear them and the mistresses, too. Thus would the Truth of God be spread!

The Christian would not join in the general jollity upon heathen festivals—he would be absent from the amphitheatre when all the rest of the family were eager to view the spectacle. He had a quiet cheerfulness and settled calm of mind which was all his own. And when trouble and distress were in the house he was the general comforter and friend. When he lay sick and scarcely anybody cared for him, he still did not lose heart. And when he was near to die, his joy came to a climax and he breathed out his soul with a song! Such a servant served the Lord most effectually. I hope there are many in this Church who, in these better days, are rendering equally valuable service in households where the name of Jesus is not reverenced.

We, too, should be doing the same in the circles in which we move. Our holy cheerfulness should be an invitation to our friends to come to Jesus. We shall never bring men to believe in a Master whose servants are unhappy in His service! To toll a knell as an invitation to a wedding feast is most absurd! When we invite men to the banquet of Saving Grace let us do it with smiling faces. Beloved, let us mingle with the sternness of our integrity and the solemnity of our life purpose that cheerfulness and joy which are the most natural and the most attractive ornaments of the Christian character. The true way to serve the Lord in the common acts of life is to perform them as unto Himself and this can be done with everything which is lawful to do. God forbid we should maintain, as some do, a broad, unbending distinction between things secular and religious.

This wicked age must, indeed, have its holy places and its holy days. What is this but a confession that most of its buildings are unholy and its days unholy, too? Of Heaven it is written, “I saw no temple there,” and we get nearest to the heavenly state when all superstitious notions about sacred places and sacred substances shall be swept away once and for all! To a man who lives unto God nothing is secular, everything is sacred! He puts on his workday garment and it is a vestment to him. He sits down to his meal and it is a sacrament. He goes forth to his labor and exercises the office of the priesthood. His breath is incense and his life a sacrifice. He sleeps on the bosom of God and lives and moves in the Divine Presence. To draw a hard and fast line and say, “This is sacred and this is secular,” is, to my mind, diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the Gospel!

Paul has said, “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.” Peter saw a sheet let down from Heaven in which were all manner of beasts and four-footed creatures which he was bid to kill and eat. And when he refused because they were unclean, he was rebuked by a Voice from Heaven, saying, “What God has cleansed that call not you common.” The Lord has cleansed your houses, my Brethren. He has cleansed your bed chambers, your tables, your shops. He has made the bells upon your horses holiness to the Lord. He has made the common pots and pans of your kitchens to be as the bowls before the altar if you know what you are and live according to your high calling.

You housemaids, you cooks, you nurses, you plowmen, you housewives, you traders, you sailors—your labor is holy if you serve the Lord Christ in it—if by living unto Him as you ought to live. The sacred has absorbed the secular! The overarching Temple of the Lord covers all your houses and your fields. My Brothers and Sisters, this ennobles life! The bondsman is henceforth free—he serves not man, but God. The galley slave tugs the oar for Jesus! The menial ministers to the Lord. This cheers the darkest shades, for now we no longer complain of the hardness of our lot, but rejoice in it because we bear all for Jesus—and the burden which we carry is His Cross which He, Himself, places on our shoulders! This ensures us a reward for all we do.

If in our service we receive but little thanks from man and, if, after a life of toil, find ourselves but scantily furnished for old age, we will not complain, for our recompense is sure, our reward is in the hands of One who never forgets His servants! There is no unrewarded toil in the service of the Lord Christ, even a cup of cold water He remembers. He who serves

Christ shall have it said of him at last, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” and in the fullness of His Master’s joy, into which He shall enter, He shall forget that for a while he lived unremunerated among the sons of men! Let this stimulate your zeal, my Brethren! If you serve the Lord Christ, serve Him well! If you had work to do for her Majesty the Queen, you would try to do your best. If she honored you with her commands you would cheerfully obey them—how much more should you be aroused to diligence by the call of the Infinite Majesty of Him who bled for you!

Perform your daily work with a heartiness which nothing else could beget in you. Serve the Lord with gladness and do all for love of His name. This I thought most important to bring forward, and though I cannot speak upon it as I would, yet I do earnestly urge all of you to remember that piety shines best around the domestic hearth—and that true religion is always best esteemed by unconverted men when they see it in connection with the common duties of life. They do not care how beautifully you pray at Prayer Meetings.

They have very little respect for the excellent addresses you deliver in the Sunday school. But to live godly, soberly, righteously—to make other people happy, to be gentle in temper, to be yielding and forgiving, to be strictly upright and honest in your dealings with your fellow men—this is what the world will read and recognize! And when they see these things in you, the Gospel will be commended to them and they will be the more likely to listen to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus.

II. Secondly, Brethren, we ought to serve the Lord Christ in what we more commonly, but incorrectly, call RELIGIOUS ACTIONS. Every professor of religion should have something to do for Jesus Christ. Though the discipline of our Church does not turn out of it everyone who is an idler, I almost wish it did. I am afraid such a rule would diminish our numbers, but it would materially quicken our energy! Drones in the hive are of very little use as to making honey. They are at the bottom of all the quarrels, but they cannot really benefit the community. God save us from being drones! Let every man and woman who is really redeemed by the blood of Jesus have something to do and do it.

I wish I could go round the whole of this company, this morning, and say, “Brother, do you serve the Lord Christ? Sister, do you the same?” But I will ask Conscience to be my deputy and leave your own hearts to answer the question. Brother, Sister, do you really serve Christ, or does it amount to this—you enjoy hearing, you enjoy singing, and so on, but you do nothing for Jesus? Bestir yourself, dear Brother—put out your talent to interest! Your Lord has said, “Occupy till I come.” Take heed lest He come and find your talent buried in the earth—your Lord’s money and your napkin rotting in the soil. Let each one be serving Christ always according to his ability.

But supposing that we are serving Christ, as we think? It is well to raise a further question—are we with our whole soul serving Christ. For mark you, it is very easy to make a mistake here! We may be working in a legal spirit and so not serving Christ. No doubt many attend to the outward matters of religion that they may win merit, or that they may prepare themselves for the receipt of the Divine blessing. I do not wonder at the zeal and earnestness which some people show—if they hope to get to Heaven by their works they ought to be zealous, indeed! The legal spirit has a measure of power in it—the lash drives the slave on—the fear of punishment impels man to toil.

But from such bondage you are free—“you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Do, therefore, nothing with the hope of deserving well at the Lord’s hands, for this would be serving self. You are saved—serve, then, your Savior out of gratitude! Work, not to obtain life, but because you have life already and delight to exercise that life to the honor of Him who gave it!

Some, I fear, do not serve Christ in what they do, for they go about it as a part of the general routine of their existence. It is the proper thing to go to a place of worship, therefore they go. It is generally expected of persons in their station to teach in the Sunday school and they do so accordingly. They reckon that they ought to give a guinea if they see the name of a friend down on the list, therefore they do it. I am afraid that a great deal which is put down as work for Christ is a kind of sleep-walking, done without thought, or heart, or desire to glorify God! May the Holy Spirit awaken us out of such mere mechanical acts and bring us to be in heart and soul the Lord’s willing, ardent workers.

Some, I fear, render service in a party spirit. They serve and they think it is Christ they are serving—but in fact it is their own denomination or little Church. They would be almost vexed to hear of God’s being honored among any other sort of Christians! They hope there will be a revival, but they would like it to be pretty nearly confined to the walls of their own Chapel. They serve a clique, not Christ. Their sympathies never go beyond the particular section of the Church to which they belong and they are rather moved by emulation to see their own opinions dominant than by zeal for the Glory of God. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, break those bonds if they hold you! We ought to be zealous for the whole Truth of God! We ought to labor to increase the number of those Christians who hold the Gospel in its purity—but still—never let our jealousy for pure religion degenerate into bigotry! Let us love the whole Church more than a part, and Christ best of all!

In more instances, still, the self-spirit comes in to usurp the place of Jesus. I wonder how large a proportion of our zeal, if it were analyzed, could be accounted for by the desire of prominence, the ambition to be thought useful and the wish to shine among our fellow men? I cannot set up a furnace here and put my own zeal or yours into the crucible just now, but again I ask your conscience to be my deputy to analyze, honestly, the motive which sways you and to tell you plainly how far you are serving self and how far you are serving Christ. We are not always serving Jesus, I fear, when we think we are most doing so, for our main object may be to please our fellow creatures.

Our parents wish us to be active in the Church and, therefore, we do it.

Our friends would not be pleased if we were idle and, therefore, we make ourselves active. From our position we are expected to be engaged in some department of Christian service and, therefore, we enter upon it. Brothers and Sisters, we must rise above this! What we do—whether we teach in the school, or visit the sick, or distribute tracts, or preach the Gospel—we must do as unto the Lord, alone. And the master motive which should, indeed, crush out every other, must be this—“we serve the Lord Christ.” Brethren, let others take what they will for their motto, I charge you by the Holy Spirit—write this upon your banners—“We serve

the Lord Christ.”

If any request you to serve this literary group or that political faction, or to give your whole attention to some great moral reform, let your answer be, “We serve the Lord Christ.” Aid in anything that is good—whatever things are lovely and of good report, and are for the benefit of mankind, you are bound to consider—but still your main lifework, your true business which must absorb your energies and eat you up, is this—“We serve the Lord Christ.” They beckon us from this point, crying, “Come over and help us.” They call to us from the other corner, “Come and work with us,” but our answer must be, “We are an independent brigade. We are already committed to the noblest cause—we are sworn to a Captain who has no rival! We are not able to promise ourselves to any of you, though in which you do good we are your allies. Jesus we serve and none else. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” May God help us to do this always!

III. Now I am coming to the last part of my discourse, which, to me, is the most interesting, and I trust it may be so to you. We serve the Lord Christ IN SPECIAL ACTS DONE TO HIMSELF. I cannot tell how you feel, but I often wish I could do something for my Lord, Himself, personally. I frequently meet with kind souls to whom God has blessed my ministry. They express their thankfulness to God and their love to me by aiding the various works committed to my charge, for which I am deeply grateful to them. But now and then a friend says, “I will cheerfully subscribe to your work, but I desire, also, to show my personal thanks to yourself. What can I do for you?”

Now, towards those whom we esteem, this is a natural feeling. And in spiritual things there is a similar desire towards our Divine Benefactor. Our hearts long to offer something to Jesus, distinctly to Jesus, Himself. He has gone from us, or we would delight to minister to Him of our substance, to make Him a feast, to furnish Him a chamber, or to wash His feet. How gladly would we lend Him our coat, our animal, our guest chamber or anything we possess! We would watch His every need and endeavor to forestall it if He were here. But He has gone. Are we, therefore, denied the privilege of rendering personal service to Him? I think not.

Let it be our pleasant task, now, to consider what we can do directly and distinctly for Him. First, we can adore our Lord. We can bow at His feet and worship Him as our Lord and our God. We shall do well to exercise our hearts in frequent acts of devotion to the Son of God. I do not mean offering prayers and petitions, excellent as these are, but holy contemplation, meditation, admiration, thanksgiving and worship of Jesus. Far be it from us to neglect the adoration of any one Person of the adorable Trinity in Unity—that were a grievous sin—but to worship Jesus does not involve forgetfulness of the Father or of the Holy Spirit.

Fix your eyes on the Person of Jesus. View His work on earth. Contemplate His holy life and expiatory death. Meditate upon His great love, His dying love, His living love. Follow Him from the tomb to Olivet, and from the mountain’s brow to Heaven’s gate and the right hand of the Father. Pay your homage before His Throne, blessing, praising and adoring Him. We ought not to be satisfied without special acts of personal thanksgiving in which we exercise our love and reverence for Him who is altogether lovely in our eyes. True, we may be doing nothing for our fellow men while thus occupied, but Jesus is dearer to us than the whole race of men—and it is only His due that we render Him when we bow adoringly at His everblessed feet.

Then, Brethren, when you have adored Him in secret, you should do the like in public by speaking well of Him and extolling Him before others—not so much for their good as for Christ’s Glory. I must confess I enjoy a sermon, best, in which I have to speak most of my Beloved. If I have to set Him forth rather than to exhort you, I feel best pleased. There are other things to be done besides, but this is the sweetest task. I love to spend all my preaching time in making Jesus lovely in man’s eyes, in lifting Him up on a gloriously high Throne in the esteem of those who listen to me. Brothers and Sisters, do this, yourselves, in your common talk! Make a point of turning the conversation round till it bears on Him. Frequently begin a conversation about Jesus and let men know that you glorify Him! In such special acts of devotion to His Person, I pray you abound.

Next, we should pray for Him. Do you understand that? Some do not. The Psalmist says, “Prayer also shall be made for Him continually.” It is very delightful to pray for sinners and pray for Believers—but there should be special prayer for Jesus Christ—for the extension of His kingdom. That He may see of the travail of His soul and that His Second Advent may speedily arrive. We should pray for the conversion of those who deny His Deity and those who fall into deadly errors as to His substitutionary sacrifice. We should make earnest supplication for the quickening of the love of Jesus in the hearts of the faithful and for the turning of the disobedient to the knowledge of the Truth of God. Such prayers should be very frequent with us for His sake and with an eye to His Glory. We pray for this and that, but surely Jesus ought to have a larger measure of our supplications!

Brethren, next to this there should be much communion with Him. I think I hear someone say, “Is that serving Him? I call it enjoying Him!” Yes, I know it is, and you may take it in which way you will, for He says, “If any man serve Me, let Him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be.” So that you will be sure to be with Him if you serve Him. To be near Him is one of the great essentials of true service. Remember His dying request, “This do you in remembrance of Me.” And what was that? Why, it was to observe the Lord’s Supper, which is the outward and visible sign of communing with Him! If He attaches so much importance

to the outward sign, how much more does He value the inner reality of fellowship with Himself?

The fact is that the head which leans upon His bosom is thereby consecrated to His love and is rendering Him service. The cheek on which He imprints the kisses of His month is doing Him its best homage while it receives His best favors. Walk not at a distance from Jesus or you will grieve Him! Abide in Him and you will bring forth fruit to Him. Let no day pass without a word with Jesus. You are His spouse—can you live without a loving word from your Husband? You are of His flesh and of His bones— let unbroken communion be the very habit of your being! Brethren, the Lord’s Supper is worship rendered to Jesus and is mainly an act which begins and ends upon Him—you commemorate His death, you set forth His flesh and blood. Your union and communion with Christ are not so much meant to benefit others, as to spend itself upon Him. Therefore attend to it for His sake. Let your eyes be fixed upon only Him. Whatever others may think of your raptures and delights in Jesus—however much they may call them emotional and unpractical—remain content with having done it unto Him.

Bear with me while I mention other ways in which you may serve Jesus personally. You may do so by sitting at His feet and learning of Him, studying the Word and pleading for the Holy Spirit to give you light into its meaning. Martha prepared a feast for Him and our Lord did not blame her. But He gave Mary the preference who sat at His feet. One in the crowd said concerning Christ, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the paps that gave You suck.” To administer to His childhood seemed the highest of earthly favors. But Jesus said, “Yes, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.” Get that blessing! Hear it from His own lips! Study His Word—make much of every syllable. Try to get at the essential spirit and do not tarry in the killing letter—and you will then be personally serving Him, for as a Teacher He is pleased when we are His attentive pupils. This is a sweet way of pleasing the Lord Christ.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, remember, if you would serve Christ personally, you must obey Him. “Oh,” you say, “I did not think that would be a very choice way of serving Him.” Listen! “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” He has chosen obedience as the special pledge and token of our love! You have said, “I wish I could build a Chapel, or support a minister or a missionary out of my own purse.” I wish you could, but still, Jesus has not selected that as the love token. He has said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Complete, prayerful, habitual obedience to Christ is the most choice pledge of affection which we can present to our Lord. May Infinite Mercy help us to present it!

We may do to Christ personal service, next, by being willing to bear reproach for His sake. When you are willing to take upon yourself the defense of a man’s character. To throw yourself so completely into him that the reproaches of them that reproach him fall upon you—you have rendered to that man no mean proof of love. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if, when they laugh at you for Christ’s sake, you clap your hands for very glee to be counted worthy to be ridiculed for Him! If you take, joyfully, the spoiling of your goods, or the slandering of your character! If you know the meaning of this word, “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you”—then have you rendered personal service to Him whom you love! And then you may sit down and be thankful for having been allowed to drink of His cup and to be baptized with His Baptism.

Further, you can show personal kindness to Christ by caring for His Church. The Lord had forgiven Peter and Peter, no doubt, wished to do something to prove his love. His Lord somewhat vexed him by three times putting to him the question, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” And when the disciple had protested his love, the Master said to him, “Feed My sheep,” and, “Feed My lambs.” Go, then, and teach the little children and instruct those of riper years. What He has taught you, teach to others, and you will be doing service to Him. He bids you consider it so, for to you who love Him, He says, “Feed My sheep.”

If you cannot serve with your tongue, there remains another mode of pleasing Jesus. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and relieve distress of every kind. “But that is not doing service for Him.” I have the best authority for saying that it is, for, “Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, I was hungry and you gave Me meat, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. Sick and in prison, and you visited Me. Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me.”

Actual gifts to the poor and helps afforded to those who need them are grateful love tokens to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is not here, but His poor saints are. Any saint is an image of Christ, but a poor saint is the express image of Christ! There is a something more about him than about the rich, in which he is even, in detail and circumstances, more like his Lord. Do, then, to your Lord’s own members what you would have done to Him if He, Himself, were here. Still, I think that every now and then, for Jesus, there ought to be a little special wastefulness of love. The woman with her alabaster box of very precious ointment would, no doubt, gladly have joined with the holy ones of substance who ministered to Him. I have no doubt she would very gladly have poured water on His feet when He came into the house weary, or she would have waited at the table when He ate.

But all this would not have sufficed her ardent love. She wanted to perform an extraordinary act which would be all for Him—she looked at that precious box—she must break that, for she would give Him something which she could not afford to do every day—in fact, which she never did attempt to give but once in her life! Brothers and Sisters, think of something special you can do for Jesus. Let it cost you something and if it pinches you, so much the better! It will be sweet to bear a pinch for Jesus! Think of something that you could not justify in prudence if you had to sit down and talk it over. Do it for Him, not to talk about to others, afterwards, nor for others to brazen abroad. But do it for Him—and then if they do publish it you need not be angry, for Jesus said, “Where ever this

Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.”

Be not ostentatious, but do not be in such a great worry to hide your work for Jesus, for the knowledge of it may do other people good and lead them to imitate the deed. Still, do it unto Jesus, only. I cannot suggest what you shall do. And it would be indelicate for me to attempt to do so. Who would think of suggesting to a wife what she should give to her husband as a special private love token? Oh, no! These things are too choice for others to meddle with. They are secrets between the Lord and His elect, suggestions of personal love which cannot come from without. Do you enquire, “What shall I do for Jesus to praise Him?” Bring forth the choicest that you have and offer it when your heart is best attuned and ready for the giving of it.

My whole soul thirsts to be doing this often, for I owe all I have and all I am to Jesus, my Lord! Here stands a man before you who has not one single thing in all the world but what he has received from his Lord! He has not a penny but what is lent him! He is clothed by charity and fed by mercy! He is a pauper by nature and yet wealthier than a millionaire because he lives as a gentleman commoner upon the daily bounty of God in Christ Jesus! Here stands before you an unworthy servant of the best of masters! He is a poor relation of the most generous of householders! He is happy to be in such a case!

Are there other men and women here who owe all to my Lord? If they do, let it be said of them, “You serve the Lord Christ.” So let it be said of them while they live and till they die! What better can they desire? For myself, I am resolved, by Divine Grace, more fully to yield my whole body, soul and spirit to Him whose I am, whom I serve. Grace be with you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Colossians 3, 4:1-6.** HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—179, 710, 784.  
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÷Col 4.2

A SERMON FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER  
NO. 354

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1861, *BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,*AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.   
*“Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”* Col 4:2

THOSE of you who constantly listen to my voice are aware that on the first Sabbath of the year I always receive of a venerable Clergyman—a veteran warrior in the Lord’s hosts—a verse of Scripture which I accept as my New Year’s text and which after being printed becomes the motto of my congregation for the following year. It is somewhat singular that my venerable friend should have sent me in the envelope about a month ago this text. He knew nothing of the proposition for a week of prayer. I do not know that it had been even determined upon at that date—certainly neither to his knowledge nor to mine—and I could not but help thinking when I opened my envelope and saw what was to be my text, that he had been directly and specially guided of God, that my text might be in keeping with the engagements of the week. “Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

How greatly do I rejoice that the Churches are aroused to prayer. My honored and venerable Brother will this morning stand up in his village Church, lift up holy hands and bid his people join in the common supplication and I feel but too happy as his younger Brother in Christ—as but a babe compared to so experienced a pastor—to follow his example in stirring you up that you, too, as a great host may join with the general company of the faithful and besiege the Throne of Grace till you carry the gates of Heaven by storm and obtain the mercy which both you and the world so much require.

Without further preface, let me observe that there are three exhortations in the text connected with prayer. The first is *continue*. The second is *watch*. And the third is *give thanks*. “Continuance” sits like Moses on the top of the hill, while Watching and Thanksgiving, like Aaron and Hur, hold up its hands.

I. And first, in regard to prayer, the Apostle says “CONTINUE.” Be you not, O you intercessors with God for men— be you not as those whose goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dew. Do not begin to pray and then suddenly cease your supplications. That will prove an ignorance as to the value of the mercy which you seek and a want of earnestness as to your obtaining it. How many there are who, under a powerful sermon or during a trying Providence, have bent their knees suddenly in hasty prayer! They have risen from their knees and they have forgotten what manner of men they were.

Take away the whip from them and they have ceased to run. Remove from them the tempest and they have ceased to fly before it. They have ceased to pray when God has ceased to smite. O Church of God, imitate not these heathen men and publicans. Wake not yourself up to a sudden fit of prayer and then return again to your sloth. Stir not yourself a moment from your bed to throw your heavy head back again upon your pillow but continue in supplication—cease not to pray. There is a great distinction between the prayer of the real convert and the merely convicted sinner. The merely convicted sinner, termed by the Law, calls but once. The awakened heart, renewed of the Holy Spirit, never ceases to cry until the mercy comes.

A few days ago, by the seaside, on the coast of the Isle of Wight, a woman thought she heard, in the midst of the howling tempest, the voice of a man. She listened. It was repeated. She strained her ear again and she caught, amid the crack of the blast and the thundering of the winds, another cry for help. She ran at once to the lifeguards who launched their boat and some three poor mariners who were clinging to a mast were saved. Had that cry been but once and not again, either she might have doubted as to whether she had heard it at all, or else she would have drawn the melancholy conclusion that they had been swept into the watery waste and that help would have come too late.

So when a man prays but once, either we may think that he cries not at all, or else that his desires are swallowed up in the wild waste of his sins and he himself is sucked down into the vortex of destruction. If the Church of God shall offer prayer this week and then shall cease to be in earnest, we shall think her never to have meant her prayers. If she shall but now and then start up and make her supplications we shall write her down a hypocrite intent for a moment upon keening appearances, but afterwards relapsing into her lukewarm Laodicean condition. The exhortation of my text, I think, stands in contrast, then, to the transient prayer which is often offered by ungodly men. *Continue* in prayer. Do not pray once and have done with it, but continue in it.

I think further that the exhortation to continue may be put in opposition to the common dealings of many with God who pray and pause and pray and pause—are earnest and then cool, earnest and colder still. There is a sharp frost—a rapid thaw and then a frost again. Their spiritual state is as variable as our own weather. A shower, sunshine, mist, shower, sunshine again. They are everything by turns and nothing long. There are too many Churches which are just of this character. See them one week, you would believe they would carry all before them and convert the town or village in which they are located.

See them next week and they are “As sound asleep as a church,” which is a common Proverb, a church being too often the sleepiest thing in all the world. Sometimes they ran and they did run well— what did hinder them? But they stopped, they paused. They looked about them and after a while they ran again—but they moved not swiftly enough to be able to make up the time lost when they were standing still.

Now I am afraid our Churches have for a considerable period been just in this state—have been sometimes hot and sometimes cold. Look at our revivals everywhere—the American revival, it is a great wave and then dry sand. Look at the Irish revival. I fear that in the end it will come to the same amount. Almost everywhere there have been great stirrings. As if a holy fire had fallen and was about to burn up all the stubble, all men stand in wonder at it, but it ceases and a few ashes remain. The fact is, the Church is not healthy, she has intermittent fits of health. She has starts of energy, she has paroxysms of agony. But she does not agonize for souls—she is not always earnest, she is not always busy. Well did Paul need to say to this age as to his own, *“Continue* in prayer.” Not one week, but every week. Not for a season, but at all seasons. Be you always crying out unto the Lord your God.

In the black country of England, you who have traveled will have observed fires which never in your recollection have been quenched. I believe there are some which have been kept burning for more than fifty years, both night and day, every day in the year. They are never allowed to go out, because, we are informed, the manufacturers would find it amazingly expensive again to get the furnace to its needed red heat. Indeed, the blast furnace, I suppose would all but ruin the proprietor if it were allowed to go out once every week. He would probably never get it up to its right heat until the time came for letting the fire out again.

Now, as with these tremendous furnaces which must burn every day or else they will be useless—they must be kept burning or else it will be hard to get them up to the proper heat—so ought it to be in all the Churches of God. They should be as flaming fires both night and day, caldron after caldron of the coal of earnestness should be put to the furnace. All the fuel of earnestness which can be gathered from the hearts of men should be cast upon the burning pile. The heavens should be always red with the glorious illumination and then—then might you expect to see the Church prospering in her Divine business and hard hearts melted before the fire of the Spirit.

Continue, then, in prayer. Never let your fire go out. But why? Why should the Church always be in prayer? Understand we do not mean by this that men ought to leave their business, forsake their shops and neglect their household, to be always supplicating. There were some fanatics in the early Church who gave up everything that they might be always praying. We know what the Apostle would have said to them for did he not say, “If any man will not work, neither let him eat? “There are some lazy people who like praying better than working—let them learn that the Lord accepts not this at their hands. Did not the Master, even when He was on earth, after He had preached a sermon in Simon Peter’s boat—did He not as soon as ever He was done, say to Peter, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught”? He did this to show that work, hard work, the hardest of work is quite in keeping with the hearing and the preaching of the Word and that no man has any right to forsake his calling to which God has appointed him in His Providence, under pretense of seeking the Lord.

Never stain one duty with the blood of another. It is quite possible that you may continue in your labor and yet continue in prayer. You may not always be in the exercise but you may always be in the spirit of prayer. If there shall not always be iron in the furnace to melt, yet let there always be the fire to melt it. If not always shooting the arrow up to Heaven, yet always keep the bow well stringed, so shall you always be archers, though not always shooting. So shall you always be men of prayer, though not always in the exercise of praying.

1. But why should the Church—to come to the question—why should the Church continue in prayer? For several reasons and the first is, *God will answer her*. It is not possible that God should refuse to hear prayer. It is possible for Him to bid the sun stand still and the moon to stay her monthly march. It is possible for Him to bid the waves freeze in the sea—possible for Him to quench the light of the stars in eternal darkness—but it is not possible for Him to refuse to hear prayer which is based upon His promise and offered in faith. He can reverse nature, but He cannot reverse His own nature and He must do this before He can forbear to hear and answer prayer.

The prayers of God’s Church are God’s intentions—you will not misunderstand me—what God writes in the book of His decree, which no eye can see, *that* He in process of time writes in the book of Christian hearts where all can see and read. The book of the believer’s desire, if those desires are inspired of the Holy Spirit is just an exact copy of the book of the Divine decree. And if the Church is determined today to lift up her heart in prayer for the conversion of men, it is because God determined from before all worlds that men should be converted. Your feeble prayer today, Brothers and Sisters, can fly to Heaven and awake the echoes of the slumbering decrees of God.

Every time you speak to God, your voice resounds beyond the limits of time. The decrees of God speak to your prayer and cry, “All hail! Brother, all hail! you, too, are a decree!” Prayer is a decree escaped out of the prison of obscurity and come to life and liberty among men. Pray, Brothers and Sisters, pray, for when God inspires you, your prayer is as potent as the decrees of God. As His decrees bind the universe with spells and make the suns obedient to Him—as every letter of His decree is as a nail, pinning together the pillars of the universe, so are your prayers. They are the pivots on which earth rests. They are the wheels on which Providence revolves. Your prayers are like God’s decrees struggling to be born and to become incarnate like their Lord.

God will, God *must* answer the prayers of His Church. Methinks I can see in vision in the clouds God’s register. His file on which He puts the prayers of his Church. One after another they have been deposited, He has cast none of them away and consumed none of them in the fire, but He has put them on His file and smiled as the heap accumulated. And when it shall reach a certain mark which He has set and appointed in His good pleasure and the last number of the prayers shall be completed and the blood of Christ shall have bedewed the whole, then will the Eternal speak and it *shall* be done—He shall command and it *shall* stand fast.

“Let there be light,” says He and there shall be light at once. “Let the kingdom come.” And the kingdom shall come. He that lets shall be put out of the way, he that hinders shall be cast down and trod as the mire of the streets. Up, Church of God, in all the glory of your prayer, put on your vestments and begin to plead through Jesus Christ your Great High Priest. Enter you within the veil today, for God hears you and He will surely answer you.

2. There is a second reason why the Church should continue in prayer, namely, that by her prayers *the world will most certainly be blessed*. The other evening in visiting the sick, I saw at the distance, down a long street the bright light of a fire. In a moment or so the flames seemed to yield, but again it sprang up and lit the heavens. Again it became dim and dimmer still. As we walked along, we said, “They have got the fire under control. The engines have been at work, how soon it is out!”

I compare this to the Church’s work upon the world. The world is as it were wrapped in flames of the fire of sin and the Church of God must quench those flames. Whenever we meet together and are more earnest in prayer, angels might well see in the distance the flames dimmed and the fire giving way. Whenever we cease our exertions and become languid in our efforts, the flame gets the upper hand of us and once more spirits from the far-off world can see the fiery mantle surrounding our globe.

Hand up your buckets, Sirs! Every man to the pumps! Now strip to it everyone of you, work while you have life and strength. Now each man to his knee, for it is on our knees that we overcome. Each man to his station and to his work and let us continue to pass from hand to hand the quenching water till every spark shall be put out and there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. To stop while but one part of the fabric is on fire would be to condemn the whole. To pause until the last spark shall be extinct, would be to give up the world to the devouring element. Continue, then, in prayer, till the world is wholly saved and Christ is universal King.

3. Thirdly, continue in prayer, because *souls shall be saved as the result of your entreatie*s. Can you stand on the beach a moment—you can scarcely see, but yet you may discern by the lights of lanterns sundry brave men launching the lifeboat. It is out—they have taken their seats. Helmsman and rowers, all strong hearts, determined to save their fellows or to perish. They have gotten far away now into the midst of the billows and we have lost sight of them. But in spirit we will take our stand in the midst of the boat. What a sea rolled in just then! If she were not built for such weather, she would surely have been overset.

See that tremendous wave and how the boat leaps like a sea bird over its crest. See now again—it has plunged into a dreary furrow and the wind, like some great plow, turns up the water on either side as though it were clods of mold. Surely the boat will find her grave and be buried in the sheet of foam—but no! She comes out of it and the dripping men draw a long breath. But the mariners are discouraged, they have strained themselves bending to yonder oars and they would turn back, for there is small hope of living in such a sea and it is hardly possible that they will ever reach the wreck.

But the brave captain cries out, “Now, my bold lads, for God’s sake, send her on! A few more pulls of the oar and we shall be alongside. The poor fellows will be able to hold on a minute or two longer. Now pull as for dear life.” See how the boat leaps, see how she springs as though she were a living thing, a messenger of mercy intent to save. Again, he says “Once more, once again and we will do it”—no, she has been dashed aside from the ship for a moment, that sea all but stove her in, but the helmsman turns her round and the captain cries, “Now, my boys, once more!” And every man pulls with lusty sinews and the poor shipwrecked ones are saved.

Yes, it is just so with us now. Long have Christ’s ministers, long have Christ’s Church pulled with the Gospel lifeboat—let us pull again. Every prayer is a fresh stroke of the oar and all of you are oarsmen. Yes, you feeble women confined to your beds, shut up in your chambers—you who can do nothing else but pray—you are all oarsmen in this great boat. Pull yet once more and this week let us drive the boat ahead and it may be it will be the last tremendous struggle that shall be required, for sinners shall be saved and the multitude of the redeemed shall be accomplished. Not we, but *grace* shall do the work, yet is it ours to be workers for God.

4. But continue in prayer once more, because prayer is *a great weapon of attack against the error and wickedness of the world***. I see before me the strong bastions of the castle of Sin. I mark the host of men who have surrounded it. They have brought the battering ram, they have dashed it many times against the gate. It has fallen with tremendous force against it and you would have supposed that the timbers would be split asunder the first time. But they are staunch and strong. He who made them was a cunning architect. He who depends upon them for his protection is one who knew how to make the gate exceeding massive—is one who knew the struggle full well which he would have to endure—Prince of Darkness as he is.**

**If he knew of his defeat, yet well he knew how to guard against it if it were possible. But I see this ponderous battering ram as it has been hurled with giant force again and again upon the gate and has as often seemed to recoil before the massive bars. Many of the saints of God are ready to say, “Let us withdraw the instrument. Let us take away the besieging armament, we shall never be able to storm this castle, we shall never effect an entrance.” Oh, be not craven, Sirs, be not craven. The last time the battering-ram thundered in its course, I saw the timbers shake. The very gate did reel and the posts did rock to and fro—see now they have moved the earth around their sockets.**

**Hell is howling from within because it knows how soon its end must come. Now, Christian warriors, use your battering rams once more, for the gates begin to shake and the walls are tottering. They will reel, they will fall before long— one more blow and yet another and another and another and as Israel went up over the walls of Jericho of old, so shall we soon go up over the fallen ruins of the walls of the castle of Sin and Satan. The Church does not know how near her victory is—we do not believe how much God is doing—but let the Holy Spirit for once give us a little more faith and in confidence that we are nearing the victory—we shall continue in prayer. Turn not back when we have all but overcome, continue still, even till the end shall be and the voice shall be heard, “Hallelujah, it is done. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.”**

II. **The second exhortation is WATCH. Watch, *for you will soon be drowsy if you watch not*. Joshua fought the Amalekites and I never read that his hand was weary, though the battle occupied a very long day. Moses was on the mountain in prayer and his hands grew heavy because prayer is such spiritual work and we are so un-spiritual that the tendency of prayer upon our nature will be to make us drowsy unless we watch. It is ill-praying, when we are drowsy. It is ill for a Church that is not half-awake to be in supplication. All eyes must be opened. The judgment, the imagination, the hope, the memory—all must be in full vigor, or else we can scarcely hope that prayer shall be successful.**

**I think I see the Church as I fear she is now. There she is upon her knees, with hands clasped. She mutters a few words. Her head droops, for she is weary. Again she pleads and yet again her head is well nigh fallen on her bosom. She is a sleeping Church in prayer. Am I too severe in this picture? I believe it is true. I think there are some members of the Church thoroughly awake, but they are few. There are multitudes of professors who do not feel the value of souls. There are many who will meet in the room of this lower hall and meet in our own chapels also, to pray who are nevertheless not awake, not awake to the world’s necessities, not awake to Christ’s glory, not awake to the power of the Gospel—nor awake to their own responsibilities, so that they will pray—but pray and sleep. Here, then, we see the value of the exhortation of the Apostle—“Continue in prayer and *watch in the same*.”**

**But watch for another reason—because *as soon as ever you begin to pray there will be enemies who will commence the attack*. The Church never was earnest yet without sooner or later discovering that the devil was in earnest, too. The devil has had an easy time of it up till the last six or seven years for the Church has been going on her old-fashioned way doing nothing at all. There was very little abuse of ministers—ministers were getting to be very respectable men and very little abuse of any section of Christians—they were all getting to be very easy and loveable sort of people.**

**But as sure as the Church, or any section of the Church, shall be right-down in earnest, they will be abused. Never think you are good for anything till the world finds fault with you. Never reckon that you have got a success unless many begin to cry you down. I always think that an article against you, if you have sought with an honest conscience to discharge your duty in the sight of God, is one of the highest compliments the press can pay you. Consider it as such. Never expect that the world will be friends with the Church.**

**Indeed the world will be friendly enough with the Church if the Church will not do her duty. If there were a sentinel set to guard a post against surprise, if you knew him to be a very great friend of those who meant to make the attack, I think you would suspect very soon that he was in collusion with the enemy. No, Sirs, they who fight Christ’s battles, must be men who think as well of the world as the world thinks of them—that is to say, who have no love to the world’s esteem and the world no love to them. Martin Luther used to say, “The world gives me a very bad character, but there is no love lost between us, I can give to it as bad a character as ever it gives to me.” The world says “quack, pretender, fanatic!” Be it so—be it so, O world, you have no power to honor Christ’s ministers, except by upbraiding them. There is no power in the wicked to honor Christ’s minister, except they are either trembling before him, or else laughing at him. Either way we will gratefully accept the honor and write it down as being a proof of our success.**

**But watch, O Church of Christ, watch! A struggle awaits you as sure as ever you are earnest in prayer. In riding along the south coast of England you may have noticed the old Martello towers in constant succession very near to each other. They are the result of an old scheme of protecting our coast from our ancient enemies. It was supposed that as soon as ever a French ship was seen in the distance the beacon would be fired at the Martello tower and then, across old England, wherever her sons dwelt, there would flash the fiery signal news that the enemy was at hand and every man would seize the weapon that was next to him to dash the invader from the shore.**

**Now we need that the Church of Christ should be guarded with Martello towers of sacred watchers who shall day and night look out for the attack of the enemy. For the enemy will come. If he comes not when we are prayerless he will surely come when we are prayerful. He will show the cloven hoof as soon as ever we show the bended knee. If our motto is “Prayer,” his watchword will be “Fierce attack.” Watch, then, while you continue in prayer.**

**But yet again—watch while you pray *for propitious events which may help you in the answer to your prayer*. I have known sea captains, when they have got their ships loaded with coal and they have wished to come up to London with their cargo have been unable to get down the Tyne and out to sea. If they could have got to sea, they could make their passage. And I have once or twice known a wary captain, being well upon the watch, manage to sail out of the river just while there was a little change of the wind and when his fellows have awakened in the morning, they have missed him from his berth and he has stolen a march upon them. He watched and they did not and having lost the wind, they have had to lie in port till he has emptied out his cargo and returned.**

**Now, the Church should watch while she prays to see if she cannot fulfill her own prayers, look out for opportunities of doing good and see if she cannot steal a march upon her enemies. While she has one eye to Heaven for help, she must have the other eye on earth to look out for opportunities of doing good. God does not always send the Spirit to blow with the same force. We cannot make the wind blow, but we can spread the sails. So, if we cannot command the Spirit of God, when the Spirit of God does come, we can observe His coming and avail ourselves of the glorious opportunity. Watch, then, while you pray.**

**Watch, too, *for fresh arguments in prayer*. Heaven’s gate is not to be stormed by one weapon but by many. Spare no arrows, Christian. Watch and see that none of the arms in your armory are rusty. Besiege the Throne of God with a hundred hands and look at the promise with a hundred eyes. You have a great work on hand for you have to move the arm that moves the world. Watch, then, for every means of moving that arm. See to it that you ply every Promise. Use every argument. Wrestle with all your might.**

**When you are wrestling with an antagonist, you must keep your eye on him. You must look to see what he means to do next, of where you can get the next grip at him. See where you can get a hold, or plant your foot, so that you can throw him down. So wrestle with the Angel of Mercy. Watch while you pray. You cannot wrestle with your eyes shut, nor can you prevail with God unless your own soul is in a watchful state. O Spirit of God, arouse the Church and help her to watch while she prays.**

**But one other remark— *watch for the answers to your prayers*. When you post a letter to a friend, requesting a favor, you watch for an answer. When you pray to God for a favor you do not expect Him to hear you, some of you. If the Lord were to hear some of your prayers, you would be surprised. I do believe that if God should send to you what you have asked for, you would be quite astonished. Sometimes when I have met with a special answer to prayer and have told it, some have said—“is it not wonderful!” Not at all, it would be wonderful if it were not so. God says—“Ask and you shall receive.” If I should ask and not receive, it would be wonderful. “Seek and you shall find.”**

**If you seek and do not find, it is not only wonderful, but I think it is contradictory to God’s Word. The Church has but to ask and she shall receive. She has but to knock and the door of mercy shall be opened. But we do not believe this. We fritter away God’s Promises and clip the edge of them and then we go to God in prayer and we think that prayer is a very holy exercise—but we do not think that God really hears us. Too many professors believe it is their duty to pray but really they are not so enthusiastic as to think that God actually listens and sends them what they ask for.**

**A man who should say that he knew that God heard his prayers is in some quarters looked upon as an enthusiast. And what is that but a proof that we do not believe this precious Book? For let the most unprejudiced man be a judge. If this Book does not teach that, “Whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing we shall receive,” then it does not teach anything at all. And if it is not true that prayer is a power which prevails with God, then shut this Book. It is not worthy of any confidence, for it does plainly say that which you say it does not mean.**

**The fact is, my Brothers and Sisters, the answers to our prayers are always on the way while we are asking. Sometimes they come while we are yet speaking. Sometimes they delay because we have not prayed as we should. God keeps the mercy back at times and puts it out at compound interest because He means to pay it to us interest and all—whereas if we had it at once, we should miss the interest, which sometimes doubles and trebles the principal! We are never losers by His delays, but always gainers. We ought never to say, even though Providence should tell so, that God forgets or is unmindful—we never ought to believe that God has been deaf to our cries, or refused to answer our petitions.**

**A true believer pleading Christ’s name and sacrifice and asking in faith, must and shall receive that which he asks of God. Now, during the next week, the Churches will meet together to ask for God’s blessing and if that blessing were to come, we should read the *Missionary Herald* and it would begin, “There has been a most surprising awakening throughout all the Churches in such-and-such a country.” That word “surprising,” ought to be struck out. We should say, “God has been as good as His Word. We asked Him to bless the world and He has done it. And if He does not do it, it will be because we have not asked aright, for as sure as ever we had asked aright, God would have heard us.”**

**I believe this to be as true as a mathematical proposition. If twice two is four, then it is just as true that God hears prayer. I would not look upon it as being a mere notion, a thought, a very fine imagining, or a pretty idea. It is a fact, Sirs. It is a fact. It is a fact which I could prove in my own experience by a hundred instances if this were the time and place to tell them. But I am sure that the people of God universally could prove that God does hear prayer. As certainly as ever when you write to a friend you get your answer—more surely and certainly still if you are pleading the name of Christ God will hear you.**

**But oh, open your eyes and look for the blessing! Do watch for it. Be not so simple as to sow the seed and never look for the harvest. Do not be planting and never looking for fruit. Give up your prayers, or else expect them to be successful. When we were little children we had a little plot of ground for a garden and we put our seeds into it. I well recollect how the day after I had put in my seed I went and scraped the soil away to see if it was not growing, as I expected it would have been after a day or so at the very longest and I thought the time amazingly long before the seed would be able to make its appearance above the ground.**

**“That is childish,” you would say. I know it is, but I wish you were childish, too, with regard to your prayers—that you would—when you have put them in the ground, go and see if they have sprung up. And if not at once—be childish in refusing to wait till the appointed time comes—always go back and see if they have begun to sprout. If you believe in prayer at all, expect God to hear you. If you do not expect, you will not have it. God will not hear you unless you believe He will hear you. But if you believe He will, He will be as good as your faith. He will never allow you to think better of Him than He is. He will come up to the mark of your thoughts and according to your faith so shall it be done unto you.**

III. **I have a third point, but my time is almost gone, therefore let me dwell on it very briefly. The third point is, GIVE THANKS.   
Prayer should be mingled with praise. I have heard that in New England after the Puritans had settled there a long while, they used to have very often a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer, till they had so many days of fasting, humiliation and prayer, at last a good senator proposed that they should change it for once and have a day of thanksgiving. It is of little use to be always fasting. We ought sometimes to give thanks for mercies received.   
Now, during this week, there are to be days of prayer. Take care that they are days of praise, too. Why should we go to God as mournful beings, who plead piteously with a hard Master who loves not to give? When you give a penny to a beggar in the street, you like to see him smile at you—do you not? Is he a crossing-sweeper and you have given him a trifle, he looks extremely grateful and happy and you think within yourself, “What a small expense has made that man happy! I think I will buy another pennyworth of joy the next time I pass by.”   
So you give him all the more because of his thankfulness to you. Now, go not before God with a rueful face, you people of God, as though He had never heard you before and you were about to try a great experiment on One who was exceedingly deaf and did not like to give you mercies. God is as pleased to give you His blessing as ever you are to receive it. It is as much to *His* honor as it is to *your* comfort. He takes more pleasure in your prayers than you do in His answers. Come therefore, boldly. Come with thankfulness in your heart and upon your lips and join the hymn of praise with the cry of prayer.   
Be thankful for what God has done. Look at the past year. I commend it to your consideration when you meet for prayer. Has there been for the last twenty years such a year as the last? If any man had said seven years ago there would be preaching in St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, we should never have believed him. But it is has been and it is to be again. If any friends had said that nearly all the theatres in London would be filled on the Sabbath-Day, “Oh,” you would have said, “it is ridiculous, it is an absurd notion.” But it is done, Sirs, it is done.   
If any had said to you seven years ago there would have been a congregation of many thousands who, without any drawback in numbers, would always assemble every Sabbath-Day to listen to one minister, you would have said, “Ridiculous! There is no precedent for it. It is impossible. It is not at all possible that the Spirit of God can incline a people’s heart so long to listen to *one man*.” It is done, Sirs, by God’s grace it is done. And what are we to do but to give God thanks for it? When we come before Him to ask Him for fresh mercies, let us not be so foolish as to forget the past. “Sing unto Him, sing unto Him, sing Psalms unto Him. Come into His presence with thanksgivings and show yourself glad in Him with Psalms—for the Lord is God and a great King above all gods.” So thank Him for the past and pray to Him for the future. Thank Him, too, for the power to pray. Thank Him for the privilege of taking the Church’s wants before Him.   
And do better still—thank Him for the mercy which is to come. Great God, I thank You for Sinim, the land of China, which shall come unto You. I praise You for India, which shall receive You. I praise You for Ethiopia, which shall stretch out her arms unto You. Great God, today we bless You for what You will do. Your promise is, in the estimation of our faith, as good as the performance itself. We extol and glorify You. For Your right hand, O Lord! Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy. You have broken the bow and cut the spear in sunder. You have burned the chariot in the fire. Your right hand, O Lord, has gotten You the victory. Oh come let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. Let us laud and extol Him, for He is King forever and ever!   
Say unto Zion, “Your God reigns.” Behold, He comes. He comes to judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity. Rejoice before Him, O you hills, clap your hands, O you cedars! Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof. The world and all that dwell therein! Praise Him, you heavens. And you Heaven of heavens. You spirits that stand before His Throne, for He is God and beside Him there is no God. The whole earth praises You, O God and all Your creatures bless You forever and ever!   
Thus with the censor of prayer and praise let us be this week like priests of God. And You great High Priest, take our sacrifice and offer it before Your Father’s face.   
I close my sermon. O that some here present may lay the subject of prayer to heart this week! Get alone, dear Friends, get alone this week! Pray for your children this week and groan with God over your ungodly sons and daughters! Pray for your neighbors this week! Put God to the test! See if He does not open the windows of Heaven upon you. Be much in prayer and you shall be much blessed.   
And O poor Sinner! You who have never prayed before—the year of God’s redeemed is come. This is the acceptable day of the Lord. If you seek Him, He will be found of you. “Seek you the Lord while He may be found. Call you upon Him while He is near.” Cry to Him now! Say—***“O sovereign grace, my heart subdue!”***Trust Jesus with your soul and unworthy though you are, your prayer shall he heard and you shall be able to join with the company of the faithful in praying for others as well as for yourself. God bless you all, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.**

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